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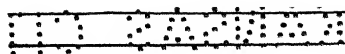
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JEWS ON APPROVAL:



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MAURICE SAMUEL

THE OUTSIDER · WHATEVER GODS
YOU GENTILES · I, THE JEW
WHAT HAPPENED IN PALESTINE
ON THE RIM OF THE WILDERNESS

JEW ON APPROVAL

MAURICE SAMUEL



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J E W S

ON APPROVAL

*Our distinction and glory, as well as our sorrow,
will have lain in being something in particular,
and in knowing what it is.*

GEORGE SANTAYANA

CHAPTER ONE

Jews, Be Nice

THE Jews are probably the only people in the world to whom it has ever been proposed that their historic destiny is—to be nice. This singular concept has played such an important rôle in recent Jewish history that it almost characterizes an epoch.

As applied to an individual, the word *nice* indicates a pleasing absence of character. It is the best that a man can be without being anything. As applied to a people and to its historic rôle, the word rises to a sublime and solemn fatuity. For a people consisting of nice individuals and of nothing more is not a people at all; it is a loose association of fourth hands at bridge; it is a protracted Sunday afternoon call; it is a subdued cough in the Hall of Fame.

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In the philosophy of many Western Jews niceness is something more than an ethical or aesthetic ideal; it is a historic force with a distinctive rationale. Its rôle among other peoples is not clear, but for the Jew it has a double function; it remedies the defect of his maladjustment and it gives spiritual content to his group existence.

According to this view, anti-Semitism is the result of a lack of niceness in the Jew. If the Jews would only temper their voices, their table-manners and their ties, if they would be discreet and tidy in their enthusiasms, unobtrusive in their comings and goings, and above all reticent about their Jewishness, they would get along very well. At the same time, Jews should have a mission in order to justify their almost unsuspected existence. They should espouse noble causes, not offensively, of course, but in a nice way. They should be social-minded, but never socialistic; they should stand for peace, without being pacifists; they should be intellectual, but not obviously clever. Having achieved a model citizenship through this combination of carefully moderated virtues they will not only be happy, but also liked by everybody.

Behind the ideal of niceness broods this tragic problem, the obsession of the modern Jew: "How

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can I get myself liked?" He sees the last twenty centuries of Jewish history as one long misunderstanding, hastiness on the side of the non-Jews, indiscretion on the side of the Jews. The time has come to do something about it.

Now it is true that the Jew has always had to walk warily. He has known the meaning of discretion ever since he left his own country. But he has known it as policy and not as *a* policy, as a necessity and not as an ideal. The Jew of the Middle Ages prostrating himself before the baron, the Jew of Poland prostrating himself before the Pan, paid the outer tribute of the physically weaker to the physically stronger. Nor can it be denied that the repeated gesture of submission at last affected the soul of the man. But there was a daily respite in his private life. The Jew never thought of getting himself liked, and he did not order all of his life to this strange, sycophantic end. He was content to get by. Whatever the stigmata produced in his soul by this perpetual dishonesty, he was at least not the dupe of his necessity; and therefore his moral and intellectual condition compares favorably with that of the nice Jew.

For the latter is in the curious position of the diplomat who does not say what he means, but has

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come to mean what he says. He has taken the gesture seriously and talked himself out of his soul. To win his point he has surrendered his purpose. He suffers all the discomforts of the old Jew, and has none of his relief. Nothing remains for a man in this desperate position but to surrender his identity too; and, consciously or unconsciously, this is the intention behind the theory of niceness.

But the conscious desire of an individual Jew to assimilate, to cease being a Jew, is strictly his own business. We may find it an intellectual absurdity. We may say that there is no such thing as an assimilated Jew, any more than there is such a thing as a digested cabbage. That is to say, in effect, that no Jew can assimilate; he can only arrange that his children should do so. And therefore one can talk of assimilating Jews, but not of assimilated Jews. "Assimilating" is then a transitive and causative verb: "I am assimilating my children," like "I am growing cabbages," meaning "I am causing cabbages to grow." (As we shall see further on, even this degree of assimilation is mostly illusory—but we let it stand now.) These aesthetic and intellectual reflections may be voiced in regard to the assimilating Jew, but we cannot go any further in discussing his case. No people

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has a moral claim on the loyalty or affection of its members; and the attempt to enforce such a claim is a form of mob brutality which is just as indefensible as a state-organized imposition of nationality.

But when Jews organize for purposes of assimilation, and issue a philosophy which hides that purpose from themselves and from others whom they pull into the stream, so that others find themselves involved in the same discomforts without having the same intentions, something like a moral element is involved. It then becomes legitimate to look into their statements and intentions. A man ~~has~~ the right to be wrong—in private. When he carries this privilege into the open, he becomes legitimate public game.

This interference is the more justified since the Jewish culture and Jewish group identity face, throughout the whole world, a combination of hostile forces which is new in form and effect. The genuine problems of the Jewish people, and of American Jewry—to which this book is more particularly addressed—have nothing to do with the problems raised by the assimilating group; and those who are lovers of Jewish cultural and intellectual values, and wish to see them perpetuated

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and developed, must first clear the ground of fake issues (always remembering that a fake issue is a real issue as long as it obstructs the view) and proceed to lay open the realities.

What truth is there, then, in the assertion that the manner and bearing of the Jews are responsible for most of their misfortunes; or even in the milder reproach that by their lack of the social graces the Jews exacerbate a dislike which might otherwise diminish and die out? Or in the still more subtle contention that whatever be the causes of anti-Semitism, we ought to be so nice that the anti-Semite would be baffled by the lack of a pretext, and just burst in impotence?

For years I made a collection at random of excerpts, wherever they occurred in my reading, of observations on Jews and the Jewish people. The sources range from Sir Thomas Browne and Gibbon and Voltaire, to Aldous Huxley, *Liberty* and *Vanity Fair*. I wondered whether it was not possible to establish for the majority of these allusions a certain general character; and I believe I have found it in their naturalness, their mechanical and unprovoked—almost rancorless—contempt. Why should Aldous Huxley have Richard Greenow, the hero of the story by that name, remark *à propos* of

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nothing at all, that he is quite sure that Jews stink? Mr. Huxley would not defend the thesis; he would not even assert, I suspect, that all the Jews he met, or the majority of them, stank. He is too scientific to believe in the *fetor judaicus*. Or why should the hero, in *Those Barren Leaves*, writing in his office, put down: "Why do I work here? In order that Jewish stock-brokers may exchange their Rovers for Armstrong-Siddeleys, buy the latest jazz-records and spend the week-end in Brighton?" Why Jewish stock-brokers? It does not appear from the story that the hero would be happy to be exploited by English or French or American stock-brokers. In both cases the allusion is set down just so—off-handedly and graciously. One cannot even take offense.

Why does someone, writing in *Liberty*, put these words into a short story: "Sid has been ranked with the pants-pressers, but he's the other kind of Jew?" Did the writer think that there are two kinds of Jews? In fact, did he think at all? I doubt it. The remark was not even meant anti-Semitically. It is merely the evidence of a general attitude, something worked into the cultural mind of the Western world. It is an accepted imagery: the donkey is supposed to be stupid (it is not); the ostrich

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is supposed to bury his head in the sand to hide from the hunter (it does not). In the same way the Jew stinks or lisps or presses pants psychologically out of business hours. One does not have to know Jews in order to make these remarks; as Shakespeare and Marlowe wrote long plays about Jews without having met one, so everybody makes literary allusions to them without thinking about them. It is in the folklore of the modern world.

Even the great make use of this general currency. Voltaire disliked Jews because, we are told, he had been swindled by one. Yet he must have been swindled, in the course of his long life, by a great many Frenchmen, and he never turned Gallophobe. Are we to assume that if the Berlin Jew in question had been nice to Voltaire, the latter would have turned philo-Semite, like his contemporary Lessing?

It must not be thought, however, that only Jews attribute their misfortunes to the absence of the Oxford and Harvard manner. Recently there appeared in New York a book, *The American Rich*, by Hoffman Nickerson. In the chapter on the Jews there is an astonishingly lucid sentence which indicates that Mr. Nickerson had thought about the Jewish problem. "The Jewish problem," he says,

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“is that of the friction caused by the present status of the Jew, deriving from the contrast between the legal fiction that no separate Jewish nation or people exists, and the fact of their actual existence.” And yet the writer, to explain current dislike of Jews, solemnly quotes a piffling incident about a Jew who was too unctuously familiar during a business discussion.

I shall not discuss in this book the ancient riddle of the psychological difference between Jews and gentiles; and in speaking of anti-Semitism I shall devote myself to those causes which convert anti-Semitism from a sense of difference into an active hostility. But even from this point of view dislike of the Jew has nothing to do with his defects, much less his mannerisms. In fact, none of the anti-Semitic books or utterances that I have come across ever deals with the real defects of the Jews. An intelligent anti-Semitism, of the kind which might be useful to us by virtue of clear insight and sound advice, has yet to be created.

The philosophy of Jewish niceness must maintain a delicate balance between obtrusiveness and immediate self-obliteration. If the gentiles are to like us, they must know that we exist. Thus we have the inexhaustible stream of Jewish apologies issu-

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ing from the pulpit and the press, and the frequent though spasmodic efforts to "create a better understanding." At these public fraternizations, where Jews and gentiles foregather to tend the flame of their mutual affection and admiration, we may hear from both sides exposés of such virtues and such achievements as no people should ever be suffered to monopolize. The one great misfortune about these recitals is, however, that they seldom pass beyond circles where they are superfluous, and when they do, they are tacitly useless. There is little ground for the belief that anybody except a Jew is ever impressed by orations and books on Jewish contributions to civilization. The anti-Semiticly inclined do not care a rap about our achievements, aptitudes and geniuses; and the only reward we have reaped in Germany for playing a fantastically disproportionate rôle in the science and letters of the country is the additional charge that we are Judaizing the Teutonic spirit.

I trust that the foregoing will not be misinterpreted as an objection either to good manners or to the desire to be of some service to mankind. But we certainly shall not acquire the first or fulfil the second by living constantly on parade and replacing the will to create by the will to please. One

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cannot help wondering what the Bible would have looked like if the text, let us say, of Amos and Isaiah had been revised by a good-will committee. I once heard a Jewish judge of New York plead for more Jewish education on the ground that a study of Jewish prisoners in Sing Sing revealed the fact that children who had received a Jewish education did not join the criminal classes and consequently did not disgrace their people. Apart from the faulty sociology in the observation (Jewish children with a Jewish education must have come from better homes) there is a special inaccuracy and irrelevance about it. I do not know how much Jewish culture is needed to keep a Jew out of prison; judging from most Jews on the bench, precious little. But the relationship to the innate values of Jewish culture cannot be very important when the appeal is so roundabout. Also, if the numbers of Jews in prisons are increasing, I am less bothered about what the world will say than about the deeper question of what the devil is happening to us.

It is doubtful whether proving to the world that we have produced a great number of geniuses will make life more comfortable for us. It is probable, on the other hand, that an increase in the number of Jewish geniuses—unmanageable as they are,

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like all other geniuses—would upset the program of the nicer class of Jews. It was thoughtless of Einstein to turn Zionist and, on top of it, to propose revolutionary pacifism. In any case, Jewish genius is not likely to flourish in an atmosphere of anxiety to please. And perhaps what nice Jews really desire is to discover every hundred years that a hundred years ago we produced a great number of geniuses. They are safer at that distance. Nor will Jewish values—or any other kind—be produced by a people which orders its life with reference to the tastes of others.

It is the insistence on the production of Jewish values which is least sincere. For the formula of niceness may be restated thus: "I'm going to be tolerated as a Jew if it costs me my last bit of Jewishness." Which is not unlike the desperate resolution of one of Sholom Aleichem's heroes: "I'll remain a millionaire if it costs me my last shirt."

It is an awful and ludicrous thing that a great human problem should be reduced to the level of Sunday-school babble. For it is really of the utmost importance that Jews should get along well with their neighbors, this being, in fact, one of the general problems of mankind. But it brings us no

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nearer a solution to suggest that the historic mission of the Jews is to keep their neighbors in good humor. It begs the question. It is, as Sir Toby Belch would say, to give a dog and, as a favor, ask to have the dog back. The commonest plea that one hears for "tolerance" between Jew and gentile is that there is no difference between them. But whether this is true or not, the plea is actually one for intolerance. For the virtue of tolerance is that it presupposes the existence of differences.

CHAPTER TWO

Hurray for the Jews!

EVERY critic must be prepared to face the charge of disloyalty—and sometimes that of exhibitionism and coprophilia too. But the critic can usually defend the practice of “washing dirty linen in public” on the obvious ground that it is cleaner than washing it in the house—and the public is the last one to object. But for the Jew, “washing dirty linen in public” has a special meaning, and the critic is disloyal in a more immediate sense. “In public” means where the non-Jews can see. Thus the critic exposes the flank to the enemy; and if he takes his task seriously, and says something relevant about the life and manners of the surrounding people (in this case the American) he is, in addition, provoking an attack.

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And yet the modern Jew must wash his linen in public because he has nowhere else to wash it. He has not the privacy of a national language and (as we shall see) not even the semi-privacy of intelligent Jewish publications in English. Belonging to a people which lives at the best of times in a perpetual, subdued panic, he must not start putting the house in order lest he bring down the philistines upon it.

The panic is real, and in a sense even justified, but like all panics it prevents ordered thinking. The Jew trembles for his rights because he knows that these are guaranteed by the law only against isolated infringement. But who shall protect him from the repeal of the law, or from that systematic infringement, amounting to a repeal, which would be tolerated or even instituted by a changed public opinion? He trembles for his economic position, because it is so precarious that every change in the general structure threatens to dislodge him. His distress is kept alive by all sorts of reminders, in themselves either grotesque (like the blood-libel incident in New York), or absurd but beneficial (exclusion from golf-clubs and college fraternities), or genuinely hurtful ("Please state religion" in want ads). But in his panic the Jew

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does not realize that the changes in public opinion or in the economic structure—and of course there is a close relation between the two—are beyond his control. Neither his rôle in the upbuilding of civilization nor his loyalty to America has anything to do with it. If the four and a half million Jews of this country were to sing fervently, day and night: "Hurray for America, Hurray for the Jews," it would not do them the slightest bit of good. In vain would they prove that their existence is dedicated to the advancement of Americanism. In effect, this has been proved beyond the shadow of a doubt by the leaders of Jewish public opinion. They have coined a very striking phrase: "Good Judaism is good Americanism." It is true that there are one hundred and twenty million Americans deciding what good Americanism is, while there are only four and a half million Jews deciding what good Judaism is. The coincidence merely shows the hand of Providence. It is also possible that what the Jewish leaders mean is: "Good Americanism is good Judaism" which, though it is even better, must come as a faint surprise to Bishop Manning and Cardinal Hayes.

But, as I have indicated, we cannot possibly wash our linen without washing a part of every-

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body else's. We cannot discuss the American Jew without discussing America, and the American Jew has a dual attitude on the question of his rights. As an American he is free to criticize this or that law, this or that institution. He is presumably free to go even further, and venture on structural criticism, though here he runs the risk of being reminded that he is in the country by the special grace of the Constitution (and the labor shortage of a certain period). But as a Jew, in the rôle of Jew, he relinquishes all his rights to discuss America. The Jew as such may not discuss America; he may only gurggle about it.

How, then, can the Jew ever face his own problems honestly? The answer is simple: he can not, and does not. Nor will he do so until he shakes off his panic. And it may help him to come to his senses if he realizes that he risks nothing by telling the truth. Anti-Semitism is not concerned with what the Jew says or feels.

Eight years ago I wrote a book, *You Gentiles*, in which I analyzed the basic *ideal* differences between the Jewish and the non-Jewish outlook on life in the Western world. I dealt, that is, with those ultimate, representative values which we may call the contribution of a group to the mental and

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spiritual history of the human species. In the course of the analysis I was naturally compelled to touch on those ugly, destructive forces which are at work in the lives of both groups. The Jews accepted the book as a one-sided glorification of their character, for they will suck compliments out of the most unpromising material. But the chief ground of objection to the book was that it played into the hands of the anti-Semites, speaking, as it did, of gentile shortcomings as well as of Jewish. The book, as it happens, sold well and was widely discussed; yet, though I follow the press of several countries, and am particularly alert on the Jewish question, I have never come across an anti-Semitic quotation of the book. Jews have quoted it times without number, indicating that it was just the thing anti-Semites were waiting for; anti-Semites continued to ignore it. It would be easy to say that anti-Semites write books on the Jewish question, but never read any. Yet it is much more likely that anti-Semitism avoids straightforward discussion. In either case honesty does not appear to be incompatible with prudence.

This is admittedly a curious apology after a plea for truth at all costs; but it is not comfortable to be accused of speaking the truth at all costs—to

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someone else. And where honesty happens, by happy chance, not to disagree with policy, we need not ignore the advantage.

Yet it should be admitted, further, that the agonized tactfulness of the Jew is not simply the result of policy and calculation. The Jew is intemperately grateful for small mercies; and though he errs in thinking that he will keep out of trouble in becoming the classic yes-nation, he really does not want to pain his fellow-citizens. His desire to be liked is so indiscriminate that he does not care on whom he makes a good impression. It may give him a thrill of altruism to learn that his long martyrdom of tactfulness has brought him no benefits.

But, having met all these difficulties, the Jewish critic must still deal with the venerable illusion, which goes back to earliest times, that everything would be well with the Jews if they could only live among themselves in unity and harmony. The trouble with unity is, of course, that everyone has a different formula for it; and the question is shifted one stage back, and presents itself in exactly the same terms: How shall we find unity in the formula for unity? It is like one of those exasperating mathematical problems which at the end of every operation blandly present the original

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equation. We are told that it was through lack of unity that we lost Palestine nearly twenty centuries ago, and it is possible that we might have kept Palestine by presenting a united front; yet it seems to me impossible that we should have kept Palestine and our own identity together.

We are warned periodically that our lack of unity imperils our existence; yet it is an obvious fact that the Jewish people combines longevity and lack of unity to a degree equalled in no other record. The world is unaware of this paradox, and we ourselves manage to forget it. And so, to account for our survival, the world credits us with a unity of purpose which enables us to control international affairs, when the truth is that we cannot even control the student rabble of a Roumanian or Austrian or Polish university. Absurd as this legend is, it is not less absurd to offer brotherly harmony as the formula for longevity to the oldest and most divided of peoples. If coincidence alone meant anything, we should be compelled to say that the Jews have kept themselves alive by quarreling with one another.

Through the history and mythology of the Jews there runs a strangely persistent theme of dualism and division. It goes back to Cain and Abel, who

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presumably were not Jews, but who were either invented or naturalized by the Jews; to Jacob and Esau; to Joseph and his brothers; to Moses and the slave-mob he led out of Egypt; to the prophets and priests. In the double name of Jacob-Israel is foreshadowed the duality of the people. Or perhaps the process was reversed; the people was double, a coalescence of two groups of tribes, and the duality of Jacob-Israel was invented as an explanation. In more historical times we have the Hellenizers and the zealots, the Sadducees and Pharisees: the mediæval modernists or rationalists on the one hand, the fundamentalists on the other—Maimonides and his critics. In more recent times we have the Chassidim and the Mithnagdim, the Reform Jews and the Haskallah—and, as the canvas comes closer to us, the divisions become more numerous, or more visible: the assimilationists, the Zionists, the orthodox Zionists, the orthodox-anti-Zionists, the Yiddishists, the Communists, etc., etc.

It appears that while the Jews always talked wistfully about brotherly harmony, they never ceased to fight among themselves. Of the ferocity of some of these struggles—in recent times, too—the respectable American Jew cannot easily form a notion. Between the time when Elijah of Vilna

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excommunicated the Chassidim, and the time when the outlived antagonism gave way to newer, more fruitful dissensions, there was a division in Jewry almost as desperate as that between the Northern and Southern States round the time of the Civil War. Intermarriage was forbidden. Excommunications were frequent, varying in their degrees from temporary and partial alienations to complete exclusions. Groups came to blows, houses were burned, vendettas instituted, gentile intervention invited and abused. Only the subject position of the Jews prevented pitched battles and mutual massacres.

The struggle between the Zionists and the Reform Jews took on less acute forms, but hundreds of assimilating Jewish homes in Germany have been disrupted by the perverse refusal of children to follow the ideological program laid down for them by their parents. The Jews of Munich, thirty-five years ago, intervened with the authorities to prevent the holding of the first Zionist Congress in that city. The Reform and assimilating Jews accused the Zionists of arresting the march of progress and tolerance; the Zionists accused the Reform Jews (and still accuse them, as this book will make evident) of having instituted a mass

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movement toward assimilation—or, rather, of having clothed assimilationism with a respectable and deceitful ideology. As far as I know, the issue never came to open fighting. But even in America the intervention of the police has been invited, at least by the smaller fry. So, Rabbi Landman of Far Rockaway, replying to Zionist charges of traitor (he had sided with the Arabs and against the Zionists at hearings of a Congress Committee in Washington), retorted in *The American Hebrew* that the Yiddish press had not yet learned Americanism; and Rabbi Foster of Newark, speaking on the death of Louis Marshall, said that the latter had been too good an American to be a Zionist. The hint to the authorities, the invitation to the police, is in the line of a regular tradition. The type of *delator* has always flourished among the Jews, and Jewish converts in the Middle Ages were the most zealous persecutors of the Talmud. Within the last decade, Jewish organizations of Germany have voiced their patriotic objection to the influx of Jewish refugees from Russia, just as, toward the end of the Middle Ages, the Jews of an Italian city closed their gates against Jewish refugees from Spain.

An example of the more implacable type of

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struggle is furnished by the relations between the Yevsektzia, the Jewish Communist Party of Russia, and the Zionists of that country. It is a struggle marked by all the peculiar rancor of civil war. The Yevsektzia has at its command the powers and prisons of the Russian state; the Zionists have nothing but the irrefragable obstinacy of Jews. When the story will be known (it is at present available only in the Hebrew record of an escaped Zionist, A. L. Zenziper) it will add one more picture to the gallery of Jewish internecine wars.

Of course this is only one side of the shield. On the other is a long record of cooperation and unity. Throughout the Middle Ages the institution of *Pidyon Shivuyim* (ransom of captives) played a similar rôle to that of the modern relief organizations. The modern Jews of Berlin looked upon Russian Jews, nationalists and Zionists, as an inferior species and a danger to their own status; but at the time of the expulsions from Russia in the nineties of the last century, Berlin Jewry rallied generously to the help of the refugees. The *Alliance Israélite*, the *Hilfsverein der Deutschen Juden*, the Joint Distribution Committee are a continuation of the old tradition.

But when we take account of both sides of the

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shield, we are still left with the vivid impression that the Jews are more remarkable for their dissensions than for their unity; and even if the account merely balanced it is impossible to conclude that harmony was the *elixir vitæ* of the Jewish people.

Indeed, it is something more than sarcasm to suggest that in all likelihood the lack of harmony among the Jews is closely related to their survival. These fierce dissensions create, or are created by, a psychological and intellectual tension which is itself a vivid expression of life. The Jewish people is too alive to be quiescent, i.e., acquiescent. The partial decay in one section is off-set (and in part arrested) by the hostility of another section. A series of internal explosions keeps the organism in motion.

The Jewish love of praise and self-praise differs from the same quality in other peoples because the praise is purposeful as well as pleasant. We praise ourselves because in praise there is harmony—the most contradictory compliments always manage to hold hands. And in harmony, we believe, there is strength. We praise ourselves in order to let the world know how nice we are if it would only bother to study us. In that good opinion, we be-

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lieve, there is security. It is not ordinary vanity, then, which impels the Jews to repeat regularly, like a mediæval liturgy, the names of their great; and to turn upon critics with more than the usual ferocity. We are under the false impression that everyone is watching us; the world weighs up our utterances and acts accordingly. And it is true that the modern world actually has a Jew-obsession; but it is not true that the obsession expresses itself in a vigilant interest in Jewish realities.

Believing that we live in a show-window fitted with a microphone and loud-speaker, we implore one another (in undertones, if possible) to be careful. The books we write are open to the gentiles; our addresses are in their language. "For God's sake . . ."

Thus the demagogueries of other peoples become our staple diet, and what the pogroms and repressions have left undone on our souls, we finish for ourselves. Our statements on Jewish life are platform pieces. With the help of a number of kindly gentiles we have produced an apologetic literature which is a psychological marvel. Gentiles conspire with Jews to give our utterances about ourselves a quality which reminds one of the superlatives of the Byzantine Court. When someone

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writes a book with the desperate title "The Truth About the Jews," or "The Conquering Jew" we can always be sure of a eulogy made half-inarticulate by emotion, with here and there a few kitenish criticisms which are only compliments in thin disguise. In this case, as in the contrary case of anti-Semitic books, the element of understanding is absent. The two types of book are equally harmless and equally unhelpful. No doubt the right kind of book would be rejected by most Jews as being anti-Semitic. Yet the least sensitive Jew cannot point to anything like an *informed* and impartial study of contemporary Jewish life written by a non-Jew.

The great majority of those books which purport to present truth in the guise of fiction, whether they are written by Jews (as they usually are) or by non-Jews, suffer from a stylization as insipid as that which haunts the decorations of Maxwell Parrish. Either the novelist treats the Jews as something almost too quaint and cute for words; or else he heaps the palette with purple and gold, and calls forth something so sombre, so mysterious and so noble, that we shiver at ourselves. Now and again a master craftsman can lift the second genre into the realm of high literature, as in Zang-

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will's *Dreamers of the Ghetto* and Lewisohn's *The Last Days of Shylock*. Still more rarely, as in Lewisohn's *Stephen Escott*, we find a sober psychological study of a Jewish type. But even Zangwill failed to do anything respectable with the first genre. *Children of the Ghetto* is amusing but misleading burlesque. Here the tolerant attention of the world is invited to a dear and lovable crowd of semi-orientals—the kind that never was on land or sea—and the question seems forever to be on the writer's lips: "Really, now, how can you ever be angry with this delightful and *ulkich* folk?"

Both of these genres have been practiced by gentile writers, too. Lessing undoubtedly meant well by us; but while his intentions do honor to his memory, *Nathan the Wise* (the play which warns Jews, Mohammedans and Christians that they all stand an equal chance of being right or wrong), is a melancholy come-down for the man who wrote *The Laocöon*. *Nathan* is a lofty bore: and when, at the end of the play, the author rapturously accuses him of being the best Christian in the world, we have the classic beginning of such gruesome productions as *Abie's Irish Rose* and *The Cohens and the Kellys*. Nor does *Daniel Deronda* really rise out of this class, though it does

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manage to add to the general defect an incomparable element of dulness.

Books have appeared which pretend to treat of Jewish life and do not. Michael Gold's *Jews Without Money* has about it a kindliness and forthrightness which win the heart and mind; but at the end of it all a reader must ask himself: "But this people which he depicts is known to have maintained an identity and culture for some thousands of years. By virtue of what forces and institutions? How can this collection of whores, *schlimihls*, pimps, victims and fakers have made such a stir in the world for such a long time?" The book provides no clue. And this same character of two-dimensionality, and therefore of unreality, is to be found in books like *Haunch, Paunch and Jowl*, and *Don't Call me Clever. A Jew in Love* might just as well have been *Bashibazouk in Love*, except that Ben Hecht, who has no interest in his people, is willing enough to exploit it for a catchy title. Boshere is no more Jewish than David Golder. Neither Hecht nor Miss Nemirovsky was concerned with an organic Jewish life; neither of them seems to have a feeling for Jews as types in a setting.

Several degrees below the lowest of the works

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mentioned in the last paragraph but one are most of the treatises on what the Jew has done for civilization in general, and for the building of America in particular. The latter theme could be especially interesting if the writer would only deal with the realities and indicate our joint responsibility in the bad as well as the good features of American life. But I have not yet seen a book on this subject which does not remind me of a *badchan* at a wedding, ringing into his rhymes the name of every guest who might be good for largesse. On the theme of America the compilers outdo themselves. Their tabulated researches read like the pages of an English-Jewish weekly, where one column startles us with the information that Einstein has made a speech on the Unit Field Theory, while the next one goads us into a frenzy of racial pride with the information that Nathan Pelerowsky achieved honorable mention in the Inter-State High School Basketball preliminaries: the emotion being heightened by the additional triumph of Shirley Greenspan, who has just graduated from the Excelsior Musical Academy. In these books the basic assumption is that every Jew who gets into the papers without going to prison is a boon to American life. *The Jazz Singer* croons side by side with the late

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Albert Michelson, and Dr. Jacobi must share his honors with Irving Berlin. Still lower than these compilations—in fact, lower than anything the human intelligence should be able to perceive—stand the Who's Whos of American Jewry.

The situation may be summarized by saying that there does not exist in English-speaking Jewry a single writer—let alone a group of writers—who shall stand in the same relation to Jewish life as Sinclair Lewis, Theodore Dreiser or Walter Lippmann to American life. Not every writer is called upon to be a critic. The study of the ideal is as legitimate and as necessary (though not more so) as the study of the real; a people with many critics and no panegyrists would be, perhaps, diseased. It would not be less so with nothing but panegyrists. But both critics and panegyrists must have an understanding of their subject-matter.

The one substitute for the critical writer—which is the critical speaker—has been equally denied American Jewry. There are no oral critics of Jewish life because there are no platforms or pulpits free from the panic of outside reaction, or the inner pressure of the "drive." Concerning the latter phenomenon, which has played a historic rôle in

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American Jewish life, I shall have much to say in the sequel.

Honest critics cannot be had to order; and it seems a little too much to ask that the objects of criticism shall consistently support their critics. Other peoples are in a more fortunate position; for the genuine, able critic is the type of beneficent busybody who must either speak out or burst, and since it is better to speak and take a chance than to keep silent and burst, the peoples of the world get their dose of criticism whether they want it or not. But the Jewish critic has an excellent recourse: he can always go away and criticize someone else. And thus a vital ingredient of Jewish life is automatically eliminated. The Jews must, because of their anomalous position, achieve that little too much: and they may be helped toward it by realizing that at least two parts of their objections, the fear of the philistines and the blind worship of harmony, are grounded on false reasoning.

CHAPTER THREE

Priests and Rabbis

THE priest is the lineal descendant of the medicine-man; the rabbi is the descendant of the Old Man or Sage.

The rabbi is a legalist, scholar and thinker; he is the repository of the knowledge of his time. The priest is a magician; he is concerned with the current method of establishing contacts with the deity. The rabbi must be learned; the priest must be on the inside with God. A learned rabbi is the ornament of his profession; a learned priest is suspected of hypocrisy. The function of the rabbi is to spread knowledge; that of the priest to spread enthusiasm.

Judaism began with a regular priesthood, but early in the history of the people the priests were

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discredited by the prophets, and by the time of the Second Commonwealth the priest was much less important than the rabbi. In two respects at least Christianity was a backward step from Judaism. It revived the importance of the vicarious atonement and it re-emphasized the central position of the priest. The vicarious atonement was well known in primitive Judaism; it was connected with the scapegoat and the High Priest. It survives vestigially to this day in the *kaparah* ceremony, a two minute gesture performed once a year. The vicarious atonement receded from its prominent place in the religion as the moral and intellectual leadership of the people passed to the sages or rabbis. In Christianity it became and remains a cardinal doctrine.

In Judaism the priesthood was not the ultimate religious authority. It took its directives from the decisions of learned laymen. In Christianity the priests prescribed the religion. The early rabbis or sages were, like the earliest Christian priests, unpaid. Rabbi Jochanaan, the shoe-maker or shoe-dealer, Rabbi Meir, the scribe or copyist, Rabbi ben Ilai, the carpenter, and many others refused to make their living from their learning. The practice continued down into recent times, its most dis-

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tinguished exponent being the Vilna Gaon. When the rabbis, like the Christian priests, accepted pay, it was not in their religious but in their educational capacity. They did not take money for praying, or for maintaining a church, but for teaching. They taught everything: law, logic, morals, dietetics, hygiene, geography, astronomy, medicine and whatever else was available. Rabbis did not, as such, have any official position, the name being as much a courtesy as an official title. When, at various times in the later history of the Jews, the rabbi took on some of the functions of the priest, he still remained the teacher rather than the intermediary.

In fact, for the Jew religion and learning were in a sense co-terminous. "An ignorant man cannot be pious," the Jewish sages declared, a tremendous doctrine which the majority of the Church Fathers denied, they in turn declaring that learning was a greater bar than riches to salvation. One cannot get rid of learning by imparting it. They therefore made their peace with riches long before they made it with learning; and in acquiring learning, they made it the privilege of the sacerdotal office.

The glorification of the intellect is open to abuse, and there have been counter-movements in Jewish history. But the peculiar characteristic of the rab-

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binic rôle, as distinguished from the priestly, and of the Jewish religion as distinguished from the Christian, has been, since early times, the exaltation of mind and knowledge.

The modern Westernizing rabbi is on the whole the nearest approach that we have had in twenty-five hundred years to a priesthood. For the Westernizing rabbi represents not culture and intellect, but religious duty united with certain social functions. To understand the Western rabbinate we must go back to the Jewish Reform movement of the last century.

Like the rise of Protestantism in Christianity, Reform in Judaism was an increase in superstition. This characterization may sound curious on the surface, but the two movements, Christian Protestantism and Jewish Reform were alike in this: they employed all the current intellectual devices of the time to establish a pure theology, one divorced, ostensibly at least, from a social organism. There is much more superstition in a theological system which is befuddled with pseudologic (and can any other kind of logic be used in theology?) than in flat, indiscutable dogma. The dogmas of an old religion, left to decay in peace, bring about "a wide diffusion of unobtrusive sciep-

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ticism among educated people.” Being indiscutable, they are put into a separate compartment, and interfere less with the processes of the mind. In a “rational” theology the hazy reasoning, the specious relationship to science, the inexact appeal to exact thought, are dangerous to the intellect. The whole mind is infected, and the better the mind the more deplorable the result.

The old type of rabbi represented the development of the intellect for the glory of God. The Reform movement represented the removal of the intellectual motif from the Jewish religion; its purpose was to provide a less exigent Judaism for Jews drifting into a non-Jewish life.

A secondary result was the return to vicarious religion. Whereas, until the rise of the Reform movement, every Jew had to provide his own Judaism, it now became easier to follow the Christian model and engage a group representative. The result might have been a gain, if the old Jewish religion had occupied the attention of its adherents with theological matters. It is better to listen to a priest once a week than to spend one's time discussing theology. But the Jewish religion had been preoccupied with non-religious values. Its dogmas had to do with ritual, not thought. It never de-

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veloped a formal credo. Its superstitions were incidental, not essential. And to a large extent it gave superstitious warrant to quite rational impulses. It is admittedly bad to do anything on superstitious grounds; but there are certain things which are better done on superstitious grounds than not done at all. In and out of season the Jew was reminded that study was nine-tenths of Judaism, and the intellectual life was a pleasant offering in the eyes of the Lord. Reform Judaism fed the Jew on ethics alone, without any obvious improvement in his morals, but with a serious decline in his intellectual calibre. It "modernized" religious thought, so that the weekly dose did more harm to the functions of the mind; and it sterilized the old, fierce impulse toward the acquisition of knowledge for its own sake.

As the people is, so the priest is. A people which wants an easy Judaism will not make the priesthood too difficult. In the days when an ignorant man could not be pious, a half-educated man could not be a rabbi. With a modern divine in the pulpit instead of a rabbi, the congregant need concern himself only with "pure religion"—whatever that may be—and once a week is enough.

The first requisite of the Westernizing, and par-

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ticularly of the Americanizing rabbi, is not that he shall be a scholar or an intellectual leader, though it is expected of him that he shall be able to do oral book reviews. He must, in the first line, be an orator of the yearnful, mystic type. In the latter case his congregation, being well-to-do and progressive, also demands that he be intellectually presentable to the outside world, that is, that he shall be at home on Rotarian and City Club platforms not less than in the pulpit. He must be able to mix praise of the successful with exaltation of the mission of Israel. He must have a good word for the higher executive, the advertising expert, the bond salesman and the banker. Nothing pleases an Americanizing Jewish community more than to be possessed of a rabbi who is called frequently to address the local Chamber of Commerce and the businessmen's council, and no rabbi feels his position to be secure until he has received several such calls.

Occasionally it is thought pretty to have a rabbi who is something of a liberal—at most, however, enough of one to act as the vicarious conscience of the rich. The patriotism of the rabbi must be not only above suspicion (this goes without saying) but vociferous and vigilant. As a Jew he must be an internationalist, as an American, a jingo. In

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between wars he may be sympathetic to pacifism. But the restriction is retroactive; he must not speak disrespectfully even of past wars in which America was engaged.

The tasks and qualifications of the rabbi do not end here. His outlook must be made to pervade all the activities for which the Temple is a center. He must see to it that in the Sunday school little Jews learn how little they need learn in order to be full-fledged carriers of "the mission." There are men's clubs and sisterhoods, lecture courses and civic affairs. There are also births, deaths and marriages, visits to the leading congregants, and relations with the local press. Finally, there is the ever-present "drive."

A rabbi who is successful in these many rôles can hardly have the time, even if he has the inclination, for intellectual pursuits. He must be content with the training which he has brought with him from the seminary; if he can manage, from hearsay, scrappy reading and fake research, to put together a book or two, he is giving more than is expected of him, and he achieves an unusual eminence in his profession.

Since the oratory of the rabbi is his outstanding

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qualification, it provides an important index to the sort of thing which goes down well as modern Judaism. It is not the natural oratory of a speaker excited by his subject, but the trained product of the elocution schools. The voice betrays the pleasing effect of lessons in chest, throat and uvula management, while the graceful gestures reflect in their turn the many hours spent before the mirror. I like to picture to myself one of the young aspirants to rabbinic honors watching himself deliver the solemn phrase: "The mission of Is-ra-el is to spread peace, harmony and brotherhood among the nations." Right foot advanced ten inches, body turned slightly to the left, right hand raised mystically, forefinger pointing to heaven, left arm bent at the elbow, hand clenched passionately, head lowered somewhat, eyes flashing from under drawn eyebrows: "The mission of Is-ra-el is to spread peace, harmony and brotherhood among the nations." No, that won't do. Body at attention, head slightly back, expression dreamy, voice pianissimo: "The mission of Is-ra-el is to spread peace, harmony and brotherhood among the nations." No, not quite, especially as in that position he cannot make sure of the effect in the

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mirror. Try again. Feet apart, body bent forward in tense poise, right hand clenched in the palm of the left, face contracted, diapason stop pulled out full thunder. "The mission of Is-ra-el is to spread peace, harmony and brotherhood among the nations!" Good! He's got it! The delighted young apostle repeats the pose, the expression, the tone. That'll knock 'em! He sees himself in the years to come standing thus, yearnful, mystic and yet masterful, at the focus of attention of a vast, thrilled throng of worshippers. He sees himself swaying their hearts and their heads; now changing from the diapason to the vox humana, now pleading, now exhorting, now breaking the intolerable tension with a neat little pulpit joke (just to show he is in perfect control) and now sweeping upward again on the wings of his fantasy. He sees himself a headliner in the press; he sees himself pulling down twenty thousand a year, and making ten thousand more on the side in perquisites and lectures.

Who shall say that such skill is not worth thirty thousand dollars a year? And who shall impugn the sincerity of this young rabbi? He has practiced sincerity before a mirror for many years, and

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his brand of it must be superior to every other. No one questions the sincerity of a movie-star. Why challenge the sincerity of a Rudolph Valentino of the pulpit?

But if practice has not made his sincerity perfect, he has the most cogent reason in the world for mystic faith. He is the last authentic representative of the miracle workers. He is the only man who can pray for six hundred dollars a week—and get it.

Some years ago, at a Young Judea dinner, it was my good fortune to speak from the same platform with the leading exponent of the higher and better type of rabbinism. For fifteen minutes a crowd of us watched a young man struggle with himself in an effort to bring the tears to his own eyes. If not for the sporting element (some of us doubted whether he could do it in less than half an hour) the spectacle would have been painful. He went about it through the medium of a pogrom story. It was not the straight recital of disaster which brought the happy climax; he failed there. The triumphant device was the repetition of a simple phrase: "And they walked round the *bimah* saying *Shema Yisroel*." The orator repeated this over and

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over again, his voice getting thinner and fainter and flutier and yearnfuller, till at last two tears got themselves on to the rim of his eyes and rolled down his cheeks. With an effort I restrained myself from jumping up and shouting excitedly: "O.K., Silver! You can go on."

The salary of the better class of rabbi may be anywhere between ten and twenty thousand dollars a year, and his income, therefore, between fifteen and thirty thousand. In Temple Emanuel of New York City three rabbis share sixty thousand dollars a year. (These are pre-crisis figures. I do not know of any change.) It is probable that if the maximum incomes of rabbis were fixed at ten thousand a year (I do not believe in starving anyone) there would be a saving of between half a million and a million dollars a year to American Jewry. It is true that the rabbis would then be reduced to Fords and Chevrolets instead of Studebakers and Packards, but then we could have between fifty and a hundred more rabbis.

Without begrudging the rabbis their incomes—though it is hard for a mere writer and lecturer to repeat these figures without a pang of envy—one cannot help tracing the cumulative effect of the

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rabbinical rise into the upper middle classes. A young man enters the pulpit, full of earnestness and ambition. He works hard and long. He keeps himself well in the public eye. Every Friday the text of his Sunday sermon goes out to the local press. He either sends it verbatim, with the striking passages underscored, or else he prepares, by agreement, a résumé which lightens the task of the re-write man.

I have seen many of these during my inside work on a newspaper. After frequenting the newspaper office for some months, after friendly lunches and counter-visits, the rabbi usually manages to learn the elementary technique. Two days in advance of the sermon he projects himself into the beginning of the next week, and sees himself in the third person. This time the mirror is newsprint instead of glass; but he postures in the same way. He has learned something about heads and sub-heads, and knows how many letters go into first, second and third lines. If he has sense, he knows how many sticks he can give himself. He also knows that if he leaves his own name out of the first heading, he stands a better chance. The following turns up at the office, neatly typed:

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RABBI CONDEMNS SACCO
VANZETTI TRIAL

MINISTER OF ANSHE CHOSECH
CONGREGATION APPEALS
TO GOVERNOR

Speaking yesterday before the Anshe Chosech Congregation of Middletown, Rabbi K——— condemned... The rabbi declared that all true Americans ... "in the name of progress and tolerance," declared the rabbi.

The trick of dragging a Jewish point of view into Papal encyclicals, economic crises, immorality in the city, slave traffic in Liberia, Christmas or whatever else happens to be to the fore, is simple enough, since one quotation from the Bible, and (as a luxury) another from the card index of sayings in the Talmud are considered enough. Everything helps. An exchange of pulpits with the leading Congregationalist or Unitarian of the locality, an address before the Banker's Conference, a prayer for the Kiwanis. The rabbi learns that it is better to speak *at* his congregation than *to* it. He reaches it best through hearsay or report. Every week the bulletin to the congregation carries the

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item: Your rabbi spoke this week at . . . He draws larger and larger crowds of Sunday mornings. He gets his first increase. He begins to save. . . .

And as his savings mount—thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred thousand—as his investments grow, helped (at least until recently) by tips from the leading members of the congregation; as he rises into the class of the wealthy and the sense of security increases, his belief in his message becomes deeper and more passionate. A mild contempt rises in his bosom for the ill-paid lay workers in Jewish public life. (I cannot forget Dr. Abba Hillel Silver's sneering reference to Bernard G. Richards, Secretary of the American Jewish Congress as a "paid office-holder.") His message takes a higher flight as his prestige and sense of security become stronger. The intelligent devices of the modern industrialist bear fruit; the worker has become a partner in the firm; his interests are identified with it. The reproach that the priest is the servant of the rich can no longer be cast at him; it has become a service of self-love.

In one well-known temple of the Middle West an old incumbent left to the emulation of the young neophyte who followed him one of the noblest

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records in the history of the American rabbinate. By the skilful and honorable use of his surplus income he became a large investor in a local financial institution, and an active member of its board of directors. He died a millionaire, mourned as the type of "practical idealist" which we need more than ever today.

I have alluded by name to Dr. Abba Hillel Silver of Cleveland because, as the most successful young rabbi in America, he is at once the type, the symbol and the inspiration of his school. His example has done more to mould the aspirations and ideals of young rabbis than any other single influence of this decade. In his Alger-book career "From Rags to Riches," no careless blunder of youthful enthusiasm, no rash espousal of a dangerous cause, has ever interrupted the smooth upward incline. Dr. Silver is "safe." His Zionism is thoughtfully modulated and held in admirable restraint. His views on the functions of religion (see his *Religion in a Changing World*), wherever intelligible, indicate a general faith in what Joyce calls "the Alrightness of the Almightyness" and a hope that the working classes will not fly off the handle. No money-lender or employer of labor was ever stung into a moment of self-searching by a

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rude hint that the Jewish mission of social justice has some sort of personal application. Adored alike by his congregation and the mass of Americanizing Jews, hailed from coast to coast as a "Young Prophet in Israel" and a "God-sent leader of his people," pursued by the same strain even into Jerusalem, where a lady nearly flung herself on his bosom with the words "you great big, beautiful rabbi," prosperous and scholarly (with a thick prosperity and a thin scholarship), he represents to a host of more obscure laborers in the vineyard the apotheosis of the rabbinic career.

Rewards like these, in money and applause, beckoning to the young rabbi and determining his character and career, are not confined to the Reform rabbinate. As our conservative congregations become Americanized, they develop the same appeal. But the Reform rabbinate leads the way, and because it represents the most prosperous and most actively Americanizing section of Jewry, it must carry most of the responsibility for the character of the American rabbinate.

The mirror-training of the rabbi, on which I have laid some emphasis, is not an accidental feature of the class. The eternal preoccupation of

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rabbi and congregation is the reaction of the outside world. All considerations are subordinated to the question: Do we make a nice impression?

It is pleasant to be able to say that there are men in the American rabbinate who are putting up a fight against this spirit, and whose main pre-occupation, as far as their position permits them, is with the congregation itself. It needs much character and ability to be able to impress a modern congregation without resorting excessively to the help of side-line approbation. But there are rabbis who have, in the face of much difficulty, achieved some standing as teachers or cultural figures. Such are James G. Heller, of Cincinnati, primarily an aesthete, Solomon Goldman of Chicago, a scholar and thinker. An interesting study in contrasts is afforded by Dr. Silver's *Religion in a Changing World* and Dr. Solomon Goldman's *A Rabbi Takes Stock*. Nor do these men stand alone. But they are a minority, and as public successes the foremost among them are not to be mentioned in the same breath with Rabbi Silver or Rabbi Nathan Krass. The high salaries of the small group have not yet pulled it into the midstream of the rabbinate, yet even among these few the majority makes the impression of misfits. If one were to ask, where

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should these men be if not in the rabbinate? it would be hard to find an answer. Social service, Jewish center leadership, are restricted fields, and most of the work is administrative. Other public jobs are few in number; they have mostly to do with money-raising. The simple fact is that there is no place in American Jewish life for the teacher and scholar who does not wish to train rabbis. We have no universities and no press, no considerable endowments and no substantial lecture field. And not even these could fully answer the purpose. The old rabbinate was a peculiar institution for which there is no substitute.

I have dealt here mostly with the Reform temple of our own time. The Conservative field is richer in men approximating to the old type of rabbi—men more steeped in Jewish knowledge, closer to the Jewish folklore and the instructive past of the Jews. As Rabbi Silver is the symbol of the Americanizing rabbinate, so Rabbi Louis Finkelstein is the symbol of the best that has been preserved of the old tradition. His combination of scholarship and character, his eagerness to learn and teach, his profound enjoyment of the traditional Jewish life, make him the most wholesome and most authentic among the younger religious leaders. But he, and

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other young rabbis of the school, are fighting for the moment a retreat action.

The older Reform rabbinate had a better record than the new, and today a Reform rabbi with the vigorous mind and scholarship of a Samuel Shulman is practically a unicum. The Reform movement was not started by ignorant men, but by thinkers who catered to wilfully ignorant men. Had they been able to foresee the result on the calibre of the Reform rabbinate, they might have paused; but they did not realize that in stripping Judaism of its *instruments* they stripped it of its power to work on the mind.

Their immediate purpose was to justify a flight from Hebrew and from Jewish "nationalism" (the two are intermingled) and to make the temple a nice nineteenth-century church. The more obstreperous and outlandish parts of the Jewish religion were connected with the perpetuation of a Jewish national life—a series of commandments and folklore gestures which, in a people kept apart, encouraged the hope that some day it would re-establish its civilization in the land of its origin. These had to go.

They were therefore attacked as superstitions.

But what is a superstition? It is simply a trans-

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fer of authority. If we want something badly enough, we are liable to say that God says we ought to have it. If we do not believe in God, we may say instead that reason and commonsense are on our side; and it is usually a poor kind of reason and commonsense that cannot be made to serve the purpose. But the first fact always is: We want. The second fact is: We can prove that we ought to.

This, which sounds like modern psychoanalysis, is only old-fashioned Schopenhauerism. It is absurd to say that the Jews believed in the return to Palestine because God told them to do so. Since they invented their own God, they must also have invented his commands. The Jews were not intellectual because it pleased God; this is only the accepted figure of speech; the fact is that they were such emotional intellectualists (in part for reasons which will be made clearer) that they made God give them authority for it.

The complicated Jewish ritual and its attendant superstitions sprang, therefore, from living needs and desires. When a certain group of Jews felt these needs and desires die—being under the mistaken impression that they had reached a permanent adjustment with the non-Jews—they changed the frontage of explanation. The Reform movement

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stepped in to say: "God's desires are not that we pray in Hebrew, or mourn for the loss of the homeland, or look forward to a return to Palestine. He does not want us to keep ourselves apart from the world by hosts of meaningless observances. We can prove logically that God's wishes are quite different. . . . He only wants us to be good and noble. . . ."

This attitude gave Reform Judaism its opportunity to boast that it had cleansed Judaism of out-lived superstitions. But, rising somewhat later than the Reform movement, there was another which was to declare in effect: "The ancient ritual and the Hebrew language are the expressions of a group will, which invented God and his commands. What was the intention of the group will, and what situation did it intend to meet? Has that situation disappeared? Do we still need to hold together? Is there still a group will, and a people? If so, what steps shall we take to give them continued expression?"

This second movement began *unconsciously* in the Haskallah, or Hebrew enlightenment. At first it aimed merely at the modernization of the Jew—but in Hebrew. Claiming only to bring the Jews out of the Middle Ages, it revived Hebrew as a

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language of secular study, paving the way for its revival as a folk language. The second, inevitable stage of the Haskallah, was that of a rationalist, national movement. Its break was not so much with the ritual of Jewish life as with the reasons given for that ritual. It was the beginning of the Zionist movement.

The reader must therefore judge which of the two movements represents the recession from superstition. I ought to add, however, that the Jewish agnostic or atheist with rationalist views feels himself much more at home in the orthodox synagogue than in the temple. Behind the bad reasoning of orthodoxy he sees a comprehensible purpose, and he can put up with the bad reasoning because of the purpose. Behind the bad reasoning of Reform he sees only unconfessed surrender. The mummerly of orthodoxy is rich and interesting; the mummerly of Reform is empty and flat.

Much orthodox ritual, too, is difficult for the "rationalist." The laws of scales and fins, of cloven hoof and rumination, the ritual bath, the separation of meat and milk, the prohibitions of the Sabbath, are irksome and unappealing. But these, as we shall see, have a history which makes them intellectually tolerable. On the other hand, the Fri-

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day candles, the marvelous Passover pageantry, the poetry of the prayer and liturgy—to mention a few features of that life—make up a folk beauty which it seems scandalous to let die. Equally scandalous seems the neglect of a language which is amongst the most powerful that have ever grown up, and of a literature which, already rich, is growing richer from decade to decade. To exchange this for a little community singing, alternate responses, “stand-up-and-sit-down,” does not look like a good bargain; the less so as we have not even gotten rid of the superstition.

In fact, the intellectual and aesthetic bargain is so thoroughly bad, that sections of the Reform temple have begun a shamefaced retreat from a literal interpretation of their own theology. Officially the nationalist element is deleted: but part of its instruments of expression is retained, on purely aesthetic grounds. An evil itch for the interesting disgraces the stark will for the good and the noble. Even Reform Jews cannot rise beyond it; and it is probably this wholesome refusal to be bored forever which will in the end be the salvation of Reform.

But at present the fact that there is little place for the Jewish public worker outside the temple is

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producing a strange effect; the Jews of America are becoming priest-ridden. The only men trained consistently in some manner of Jewish knowledge are the rabbis, and as time goes on (assuming there is no change) the educational gulf between the rabbi and his congregation will become wider and wider; not that the rabbi will know more, but his congregation less. The rabbi must be appealed to for relief-work, anti-defamation statements, fund-raising of all kinds, intellectual programs, etc. He controls at present the majority of the English-Jewish publications; he is consulted about books and lecturers. He is the leading power in the expression of Jewish life.

Now it is true that we have always been rabbi-ridden. But side by side with the rabbis there were always large numbers of Jews who were scholars and authorities on their own account. It was only the universal tone of religion in Jewish life which gave the rabbis their religious character, but the religion itself was nine-tenths secular. It is not my purpose to romanticize about the past, and to turn the figure of the old rabbi into something legendary and heroic. He was as much an instrument of the social order as the modern rabbi. He could be as sycophantic and as greedy, as calculating and as

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covetous of applause. He might (though this was rarer) be at the mercy of an ignorant rich Jew. But he stood for one thing: the intellectual life. He saw as straight as he could in the crooked mirror of his time. At times his intellectuality became barren, as among the hyper-subtle Talmudic casuists of Poland, and among the text-jugglers of the later Chassidim. This was the defect of a virtue.

Poverty was the general rule, and it was the peculiar task of the rabbi to command respect while remaining poor—in itself a valuable social and moral function. He could do this only through the consistent note of learning and wisdom. The rabbi stood apart from the community, not in the quality but in the degree of his education. Within the framework of that life, with its inevitable limitations, he was a creative element.

The one opportunity we have had in modern life of ceasing to be rabbi-ridden was through the later Haskallah and Zionism. But the opportunity slipped past us. With the rabbi we were familiar; we have forgotten how to deal with the priest.

CHAPTER FOUR

The English-Jewish Press

THERE are about fifty English-Jewish weeklies scattered through the American Jewish communities. Their total circulation is unknown, the publications confining their information on this subject to "The Leading Jewish Family Paper in America," or, "The Leading Jewish Publication of South-Eastern Oklahoma," or Western Wisconsin, or whatever it may be. I believe that a quarter of a million would be a very generous estimate.

The program, where one is indicated, is always: "Dedicated to the Strengthening of Judaism and Americanism," or "Devoted to Israel." But whether there is an announced program or not is immaterial. The only difference between one paper and another is in the format, the quantity, the

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proportion of advertising to reading matter, and the proportion of both to the length of the social column. It is true that some papers are Zionist and some anti-Zionist; some are conservative and some Reform; but the papers do not take their character from these distinctions, any more than tabloids take theirs from the political party which they support. The intellectual uniformity of the English-Jewish press cannot be disturbed by differences of opinion, their curious way of saying things being more important than what they say. This uniformity may be described as that of a tabloid press with the one *raison d'être*—sex and scandal—removed.

The ingredients which go into the reading matter (exclusive of the social columns) are composed of a choice of the following:

EDITORIALS:

On Good-will between Jews and gentiles.

The Necessity of supporting the Russian Colonization, or Zionist, or Consumptive Hospital, or Immigrant Aid Society, or Community Chest, or Federation of Philanthropies, or Talmud Torah drive.

Meditations on the Next Jewish Holiday.

Congratulations to the latest Jewish appointee, prize-winner, millionaire, etc.,

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with appropriate reflections on Americanism.

Meditations on the genius of the Jew.

Protests against the last pogrom and anti-Semitic utterances, with appropriate reflections on Americanism.

ARTICLES and FEATURES:

Good-will relations between Jews and gentiles.

Life in Poland, or Russia, or Palestine (mostly propaganda material from the relevant office in New York).

An interview with the leading good-willer for relations with Jews and gentiles.

Interview with a Jewish footballer, lacrosse player, novelist, scientist, businessman, or anyone else prominent in the public eye. These articles and interviews always have the same musty flavor of subdued but gleeful Judaism.

Then come excerpts from the Jewish Daily Bulletin, or news-letters from the Seven Arts Syndicate. Here follows something ga-ga for the children. Frequently *belles-lettres* are represented by a story of Jewish life, in which stick out bits of folk-lore

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in the form of *gefillte fish*, *chrosos*, *kuggel*, *gemorah*, *Torah*, *lockshen*, *tsibbele*, *tsitsis*, *mezuzah*, *tephilin*, *kneidlach*, *Shema Yisroel*, *blintzes* and *Oi Weh*. There is usually a column of bright comment, either syndicated or local. In the second case there is much joshing of and by Bernie Wise or Moe Goldman, with an unfailing, affectionate dig at the golf score of good old Rabbi Stern, to whom they refer (and how he loves it!) as the *padre*. If the column is syndicated, the personages are usually of national reputation, but the intelligence applied to their affairs remains local. After the column comes the social news: rank upon rank, trailing diminuendo to the surrounding townlets and villages.

On rare occasions a writer with something to say dares the company of the celebrities, the editorials and the good-will committees. A windfall to these publications is the death of a great Jew. The paper praises and ululates with oriental exuberance, and everything else (social columns naturally excepted) is pushed out. There are black borders, pictures, and letters from the leading survivors, Jewish and non-Jewish, in America. It does not matter whether the dear departed was liberal or reactionary, whether he made his money by

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sweated labor and was denounced for it, or in the scramble of the law. If he was good to the Jews and prominent among the gentiles, no questions are asked.

Sometimes there are competitions on: Who Are the Ten Leading Jews in America? or, Who Are the Ten Jews Who Have Done Most to Foster (guess what!) Good-will Between Jews and Gentiles. And it is a curious and significant fact that such a list always resembles Mr. Hoover's Cabinet—it is hard to find a poor man there. (For this we shall account later.)

The foregoing merely indicates the range of material, by no means the average contents of an issue. Some English-Jewish weeklies give as little as three pages of reading matter to thirteen of society news and advertising. Sometimes—especially when there is a grand monthly or Festival Number—everything is represented. As a rule, it is something between the two extremes.

In the last few years a boon has sprung up for the English-Jewish weeklies in the form of the Seven Arts Feature Syndicate of New York, from which nearly half the English-Jewish weeklies buy their material, some of them filling six or seven large pages for next to nothing. Some of the

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weeklies convert a syndicated column of comment into "personal" editorials. The general result has been a notable improvement in the wrong direction.

There is, fortunately, some relief to this picture, just enough to remind us that the Jewish people is entitled to the vote. Now and again *The Jewish Tribune* rose into the class of *The Saturday Evening Post*. *The Bnai Brith Magazine* (the monthly organ of a large order, independent of advertising) has done a little better. For a time *The New Palestine*, the organ of the Zionist Organization of America, was a genuinely good magazine of the not too intellectual kind. It was necessarily one-sided; it was also subjected to the annoyances of organization needs—publicity for good workers, articles by some of the leaders who cannot write, and a sort of social column. But its substance was usually excellent, and it represented a genuine cultural feat on the part of American Zionism. It was for some years the only English-Jewish weekly which I did not feel like treating as the young West End Avenue Jew treats the Yiddish newspaper he is bringing home for the old man, that is, carry it wrapped round in something respectable, or at least something I felt no remote

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responsibility for. But *The New Palestine* was a costly undertaking, and the Zionists were prepared to support culture only as the adjunct of a prosperous movement. In poverty they feel culture to be a sort of affectation. The former editor of *The New Palestine*, Meyer W. Weisgal, retired to practice his editorial abilities on *The Jewish Standard* of Toronto.

A brief interlude of enjoyment was provided by *Reflex*, a monthly founded by Dr. S. M. Melamed. In its first year or two it was interesting, irresponsible and alert. Financial anæmia then set in, and the usual paradoxical course ensued: first a long period of putrescence, and then demise.

The niceness of the English-Jewish weeklies touches them with a queer, non-human quality, an unreality such as we find in the cheerfulness of an imbecile. A stranger picking up these periodicals would conjure up a community of underdeveloped but harmless adults occupied with building temples, supporting schools, exercising charity, holding festivities, praising America and repudiating aspersions on their loyalties and abilities. The evils of the world, gangsterism, class struggles, murder, boot-legging, pimping, are forgotten here; the aim of life is to pass examinations and win prizes, help

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the unfortunate poor and deprecate intolerance—a cloistered existence above which hovers a faint memory of some strange sort of past.

The Menorah Journal, the one English-Jewish publication which may seriously be compared with the better non-Jewish magazines, stands in a class by itself. Its merits and achievements are (or were: one is never certain of the tense in speaking of *Menorah*) real; but its faults are of a peculiar character which illuminate some of the difficulties of American Jewish life.

Menorah has done its best work in encouraging Jewish writers. It gave them an outlet, being perhaps the only English-Jewish publication which did not regard the writer's claim to a living as an amusing impertinence. Its standards were high, and if the editors did develop a tyrannical paternalism toward all and sundry (they forced changes on writers, once being nearly sued for downright misrepresentation; they often re-wrote articles in bulk, frequently without any apparent improvement in style) at least their intentions were backed by some literary taste. *Menorah* became known internationally as the one hope for placing before part of the Jewish public a serious piece of work. The resources of *The Menorah Journal* were always in-

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adequate; as a monthly it would appear once in two months, as a bi-monthly, once a quarter. This was not the fault of its editor and provider, Henry Hurwitz, who has carried on a single-handed and bitter fight for its existence and its intellectual standards; but he must bear the blame for the convulsive muddle of policy which resulted from his choice of inside men. *Menorah* was never able to take care of more than part of the Jewish talent which needed encouragement, or expand into the acceptance of Jewish work on non-Jewish subjects. But even the little it was able to do, it largely spoiled in the last six or seven years through a streak of intellectual perversity.

It is difficult for an intellectual publication to stand for years in conscious isolation without showing signs of the strain. In order that they might not turn sour, the directive forces of such a publication must have the compensation of a deep love for the *ideal* values of the people—that is, for their possibilities as expressed in their finest traditions. But the men chosen by Hurwitz to act as the real editors of *Menorah* were ignorant of Jewish things, and remained so during their tenure of the jobs. One editor who knew neither Yiddish nor Hebrew, and could not read a page either of Sholom

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Aleichem or of Achad Ha-am in the original, wrote clever, sarcastic comment under the heading of "The Elder of Zion." Another, equally free from the prejudices of knowledge, wrote stinging analyses of Zionism and Zionist policy. Pretending to write for the sake of Judaism and the Jewish people, these men used as their frame of reference a purely generalized intellectual outlook; and their criticisms might have been produced just as well by clever Chinamen suddenly brought face to face with the behavioristic aspect of a people's life. The human race is supremely funny, and the Jews are in this, as in so many other things, in the front ranks. But Solow's strictures on Zionist congresses, conventions and policies could have been transferred to Democratic and Communist conventions and have lost nothing of their charm and instructiveness. And E. E. Cohen's satires on American Jewish behavior suffered from the same lack of off-set. In neither of these writers could one feel that affirmative background which, coming from knowledge of a people's life and history, and affection for them, turns destructive into constructive criticism.

Round these inside key-men moved others, for the most part as clever and as detached from Jew-

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ish life and as persistently ignorant of its values. There were distinguished and informed outside consultants like Professors Adolph Oko and Harry Wolfson—but the men on the spot governed the magazine. The contrast between Hurwitz's constant demands for more Jewish culture, and the actual defection which he permitted through his choice of men, made the protestations of the journal peculiarly mealy-mouthed. The old services of *Menorah* (it was, for instance, the first and for a long time the only encouragement of a man like Marvin Lowenthal) were forgotten in the irritations of the new dispensation. The good was infected by the bad. A tone spread through the whole journal, a uniformity like that which makes *The American Mercury* read like a succession of editorials by Mencken.

A second distortion resulted from the disguised Communist sympathies which permeated the real editorship. In writing regretfully of the decline of Jewish values, the editors presumably wanted to see them revived or reborn. This at least was the assumption which *Menorah* permitted readers to make. But Solow's attacks on Zionist policy had nothing to do with sympathy for the movement. Had he written openly as a Communist, or Com-

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munist sympathizer, he would have been helpful to some. But the trickery of his attack lay in "bor-ing from within." He would have it appear that the Zionist leaders were responsible for the Zionist situation; whereas what he really meant was that Zionism in itself was a hopeless and undesirable ideal. But by attacking the leaders first and making it appear that within the possibilities of the movement they had been failures, he discouraged the Zionists—revealing only indirectly that even Moses, Herzl and Beaconsfield in combination could have done nothing with such a movement.

However, even the generalized satire of *Menorah* killed itself by persistence. This is a situation which faces all magazines of criticism. The prophet too easily degenerates into a nag; and when he is not persecuted his attempts to over-reach himself ultimately convert him into a bore. Regular satire loses its edge by anticipation and its force by repetition; and even the irregularity of *Menorah's* appearance did not save the reader from that despairing feeling: "He's there again!"

A group which by its mental excellence represented the best Jewish tradition, also represented a sustained ignorance which contradicted the tradition. The retort that perhaps *Menorah* could not

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find among Jews who know Yiddish and Hebrew such as fitted into the group is quite beside the point; it was the business of the group to learn Yiddish and Hebrew, as so many adult Jews have done in the renaissance. To be editors of *Menorah* for more than half a decade, and to emerge unscathed by a *kometz*, is undoubtedly an achievement in its own way; but such talents are out of place in a magazine of Jewish culture. Perhaps this defect explains, too, the constant and sincere clamor of *Menorah* for more research into the past, more heavy erudition of the specialist type. While research is always good, the present need of American Jewry is much more a relationship to what we already have in Jewish knowledge; and the remoteness of the active *Menorah* editors from this necessity robbed the magazine of its most important *Jewish* function.

I return, after a long and willing digression, to the general English-Jewish weeklies. Their attitude toward the encouragement of good Jewish writing is determined by one condition precedent: they will not pay for material if they can help it; and when they have to pay, they will drive a harder bargain than an American Jewish tourist in Palestine. They steal regularly and quietly from other

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English-Jewish publications and from their own back files. I have been abducted in several of these States, not to mention England, China and Canada. On one occasion a South African paper upset me for some weeks by sending an unsolicited check for a reprinted article; the sole instance I can recall in nearly two decades of appropriations. Yet some of these papers earn a good deal of money; and when they do not (which is sometimes the case) they manage to pay the printer, the circulation canvasser and the advertising agent. The writer must content himself, nearly always, with the pleasure of appearing in print.

Yet even if the editors (who are frequently the publishers too) were to loosen up, the restrictions of quality would still remain. It is not the lack of taste, as a rule, which keeps the standard of these papers what it is; as in the case of the tabloids men deliberately burke their own feelings, and cater to what they despise. If a piece of work, written in lighter mood, does not jar with the tone of the paper, and if it can be had for nothing, it may go in. But a straightforward piece of criticism, an objective study of Jewish difficulties, a mention of Jewish scoundrels, might as well be a poem of Milton's applying for entrance to the little books

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which flourish on provincial railroad stations: Latest Hebrew Jokes, Interpretations of Dreams and Hypnotism Unveiled. Here, as elsewhere in Americanized Jewish life, the fear of gentile opinion keeps editors dithering, and it is probable that rather than run the risk of being misunderstood they will exclude from the paper anything that looks like a thought. Yet one sometimes wonders whether an occasional gentile who looks into an English-Jewish weekly does not suspect the Jews of a profound duplicity; and as the latter are sometimes accused of instigating pogroms against themselves in order to place themselves at a moral advantage, so they may be accused of playing the idiot in order to cover their dangerous abilities.

Much of the blame for the condition of the English-Jewish press rests with the rabbis, who are the local arbiters of taste, and not infrequently active or consultant editors. *Menorah's* desperate struggle to keep afloat would be unnecessary if one hundred rabbis throughout the country made it their business to train readers for the journal. Even the *Jewish Daily Bulletin*, an excellent undertaking, could be made self-supporting with the cooperation of the rabbis.

It should not be surprising, then, if the English-

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Jewish press is without influence. It does not provide entertaining reading; it is not a platform for discussions; it toadies to the rich and prominent. On the whole it is not so much a press as an advertising game.

CHAPTER FIVE

Alms and the Man

TO a people scattered about the world, incapable for the most part of imposing taxes upon itself, having no weapons but patience and money (these, unfortunately, in very unequal proportions), and resigned to these conditions till the coming of the end of all things, the appeal to pity was the major substance of all political and diplomatic action.

Charity has been the dominant motif of Jewish public life for many centuries. Whether for the ransom of captives, or the relief of victims of massacres, or the building of schools and the maintenance of teachers, the funds had to be raised by voluntary subscription. Even when pressure was brought to bear, and the "voluntary" element grew

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weaker, the sole instrument was still public opinion. Therefore Jewish life has always suffered from excessive emphasis on the goodness and greatness of the giver. But to give, a man must have; therefore, in Jewish life, it became a virtue of a special kind to have.

The *historic* rôle of charity was acknowledged and receipted in the "donors' lists" of the Book of Nehemiah, in which contributions to the building of the Jewish homeland are entered by name, as they are today in the Golden Book of the Jewish National Fund, the land-redeeming agency. The records of later Babylonian Jewish life tell of collections which had something of the technique of our modern "drives," with meetings, quotas, the calling out of names of individuals and communities. In the Middle Ages visiting collectors, like those sent out today from New York to cover the United States, made the rounds of international Jewry on behalf of the academies. Frequent persecutions kept alive a machinery of collection and distribution, and from earliest times the supplicating voice of the "appeal-maker" was heard in the councils of Israel. In our own days the clink of Rabbi Meir the Wonderworker's collection box accompanies every funeral, and the words "Char-

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ity saves from death” are as much a part of the orthodox burial as the first *Kaddish* over the fresh grave. The stamp of a charity psychology has been placed on the national character with such effect that we have with difficulty begun to think of Jewish problems in social, historical and creative terms.

This evil—the great abuse of a small virtue—has in the past been balanced by a more creative passion, the Jewish love of learning and respect for scholarship. American Jewry has no such check, and charitableness (in its simplest sense of money-giving) is almost the touchstone of public-spiritedness. The consequent importance of *having* money to give has therefore been heightened.

This development was helped along by the spiritual environment. Riches will be envied and worshipped as long as they are allowed to accumulate in individual hands, but the rich man is worshipped, in America, in the manner peculiar to all countries which have been built since the end of feudalism. In Europe, the rich man, the successful merchant and manufacturer, was the latest historic phase; in America he is all of history. Beard observes properly in *The Rise of American Civilization* that we ought to give as much space to the

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study of men like Harriman, Rockefeller and Ford as to that of the accepted statesmen. Not only was there a comparative absence of other, traditional standards, other legends and heroic types, but there was an insistent demand for men who could build the country and exploit its resources, and since such men were bound to grow rich, wealth became the sign of usefulness and service. The rich man was a pioneer, a creator, a maker of empire. A special type of gratitude was added to the natural awe which he inspired. As always with the masses of people, the outstanding incidental was confused with the essential: money is more easily recognizable than character. It therefore became the medium of spiritual reference; the possession of money was assumed to imply the possession of the creative character.

Money must therefore attend success in America, and it is so in American Jewry. No moderately paid rabbi is prominent in Americanizing Jewry, and not one poor man was to be found among its non-Zionist leaders. This situation, a necessity of the Jewish contact with America, was intensified by one of the greatest calamities which has ever befallen the Jews—the World War, in which they suffered, for a variety of reasons, to a peculiar

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extent. In particular, a large section of Jewry was trapped between two mobile battle-fronts; and after the War a series of mediæval pogroms swept over Russian and part of Central European Jewry.

American Jewry responded to the cry of stricken European Jewry with what is usually regarded as unparalleled generosity; and it is true that in comparison with most peoples, the Jews are generous. But a little reflection will show us that the standards of public generosity are low, and little acts of kindness are exaggerated into almost suicidal sacrifices. When Japan was overwhelmed by the calamity of the earthquake, America contributed about ten million dollars for relief. The collection lasted for over a month, and it represented one-tenth of what America spent in the same time on candies and cosmetics. But the language used in connection with that effort might have led one to believe that the American Cabinet had taken to chewing the grass on the lawn of the White House. When American Jewry, in the course of eleven years (1914-1925), raised about fifty million dollars for over-seas relief, the effort was called, perhaps with justice, unparalleled. But what was the real measure of the "sacrifice"?

One rough calculation will restore the sense of

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proportion. Between 1914 and 1925 the average distribution of pleasure cars in the United States was something more than one to every three families. The Jews are, however, concentrated in large cities, and therefore possess fewer cars. If we cut the average by three (a generous allowance), we shall obtain about 100,000 cars owned by the Jews of America (allowing between four and five persons to the family group). The average annual cost for the upkeep of a car was estimated in 1929, by the A.A.A., to be over four hundred and fifty dollars. In the period when they made their "unparalleled sacrifice" for over-seas Jewry, American Jews spent ten times the same amount, that is, nearly half a billion dollars, on their pleasure cars.

If, on the one side, we add up the contributions of American Jewry to European relief, Palestine up-building, and internal American Jewish activities, and on the other the amounts spent by American Jewry on pleasure cars, cosmetics, candies, movies, fancy dressing (furs and jewelry), banquets, cigars, holidays, golf-clubs, flashy entertaining, high living (big apartments, numerous servants, etc.), it would appear doubtful whether American Jewry gave away to all its charities as much as ten per cent *not* of its income, but of its

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luxury money. I exclude from the account the heavy gambling losses, because the money circulates mostly in Jewish circles. And I exclude by definition those accumulated savings which afterwards went, for the most part, to make the crash more spectacular.

It must, of course, be borne in mind that such contributions as were made came only from a section of Jewry. Many Jews gave little or nothing at all; and therefore the merit of the givers is increased. But though there have been individual cases of exceptional sacrifice, there has not appeared in American Jewry a "charity-casualty" class. It is hard to tell how many gave until it hurt, but it appears that few were hurt by it. In touring post-crisis America I have met many Jews who regretted that they had not invested their money in Palestinian enterprises (Tel Aviv municipal bonds, and other securities which fared better than a host of cast-iron investments) and many more who were sorry they had not purchased reputations for themselves here below, and salvation above, before they lost the means.

Nor do I wish to underestimate the human significance of the "sacrifice," such as it is. There is something fine about being able to get numbers of

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people together and inducing them to part with sums of money in exchange for words. Where the charity is not local, and the effects of giving not visible and palpable, the fellow-feeling is an effort of imagination. Words are all that can be offered to a man who has not seen Palestine or post-war Europe. And, turning to the side of the collector, it must be further admitted that it is not an easy thing to juggle money out of people at a mass or parlor meeting. Making every allowance for both sides, it is still difficult to reconcile oneself to the debauch of the American Jewish drives.

For fifteen years American Jewry had to be kept in an exceptional giving mood, and the technique adopted was naturally one of crescendo praise. To criticize a monied man, a real-estate dealer or a department-store owner, for anything at all in his public acts and utterances, was, presumably, to deprive a Russian Jewish family of bread, or a Palestinian pioneer of his entrance certificate. Above the immediate clamor for charity was also heard the perpetual reminder that the gentiles are watching us, that we must show them how to live in brotherly harmony, that the Jews must prove themselves the most philanthropic people in the world, and that we shall be judged in the parlia-

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ment of man by our charities. The mob technique of the American drive was applied to a curious *political* as well as humanitarian view of charity.

And so the giver discovered that he was not only a savior of lives, but a diplomat, a show-piece and a political asset. Jewish hyperbole was wedded with American verbal exuberance, Jewish prostration before the giver with American adoration of the successful. The cry of "the man who . . . who . . . who . . ." which reverberates like the crying of an owl in American conventions, was reinforced by the dittology of the ancient Hebrews. Of course there is a law of diminishing returns in investments, drugs and praise. Every successive application became weaker in its effect. At those dreadful dinners which used to accompany every drive, it became the custom to adorn local celebrities in speeches which bristled (*tishbechoso venechmoso . . . d'amiron b'almo*) with names like Moses, Herzl, Maimonides, Spinoza, and the Messiah. The introduction of secondary figures like Joshua ben Nun or Moses Mendelssohn was considered offensive. The praise rose higher; it took on a richness which would be slightly scandalous when applied to the Deity. Nothing remained, in the end, but to

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become rigid and wordless in a cataleptic fit of adoration. The dinners were given up.

The American Jewish drive reached its climax under the masterly leadership of David A. Brown of Detroit, a careerist philanthropist and the noisiest benefactor with which a people was ever blessed. When the Hebrew Union College of Cincinnati bestowed a doctorate upon him (this was, fortunately, in the days when Mr. Brown's financial prestige stood highest) it laid the high approval of the Americanizing rabbinate (the Hebrew Union College is the Reform seminary of America) upon the symbol of American Jewish money leadership. Mr. Brown had money, and he was reputed to be as generous with it as with his services; but he was determined to exercise the same generosity in the field of cultural and political advice, and here his reserves were inadequate. Mr. Brown's cultural inadequacy should have been—and one wishes it had been—his own business, and a little touch of diffidence might have saved him. But even if he had been inclined to keep his head, American Jewry would not let him. The doctorate bestowed by Hebrew Union College was one trifling gesture; for his good organizing and money-raising work,

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Mr. Brown was invited to serve as teacher, leader, representative and avatar. He was called, with that finesse which characterized all banquet oratory, a human dynamo. He was held up as the climax of four thousand years of Jewish history. Mr. Brown flew from city to city, preceded by a vast propaganda, and while pleading for the unfortunate, interpreted Jewish history, Americanism and human brotherhood. He thundered, wept, cajoled, mimeographed interviews, radioed, stood on tables, rolled up his sleeves, threw lemons among the audience, gargled and raised large sums. Finally, on May 29, 1929, a day memorable in English literature and the history of Jewish thought, he burst into song:

BECAUSE OF YOU

By DAVID A. BROWN

*Because of You,
The friendless have friends,
The brotherless have brothers,
Orphans made happy,
Widows forget their sorrow,
Because of You.*

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*Because of You,
Hope to the hopeless,
Strength to the feeble,
Peace to the weary,
Hearts made glad,
Because of You.*

*Because of You,
Children smile again,
The aged want to live,
Youth looks to tomorrow,
Respect is born again,
Because of You.*

*Because of You,
Ruins have been rebuilt,
There is the joy of toil,
Once more we're on the land,
Once more we plough the soil,
Because of You.*

*Because of You,
The banner of Israel raised,
Self-sacrifice extolled,
The spirit of service manifested,
The love of humanity developed,
Because of You.*

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*Because of You,
There is honor to yourself,
Honor to your neighbors,
Honor to your country,
Honor to your religion,
Because of You.*

*Because of You,
Across the seas,
Thousands of your brethren
Have prayed that God
Might spare you and bless you,
Because of You.*

This poem, reproduced on parchment scrolls above the personal signature of the author, was sent out as a reward to the best workers of the Joint Distribution Committee. Music by Irving Berlin is yet to be supplied. I do not know whether Hebrew Union College bestowed its doctorate on Mr. Brown before or after the publication of the above.

The characteristic climax of Mr. Brown's career was a testimonial dinner tendered him in New York and attended by his fellow-townsmen, Henry Ford. Mr. Ford, whose dislike of the Jews had

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spilled into several countries, to the moral comfort of Hitlerites, Horthyists and others, had just before that time been forced into a retraction by Aaron Sapiro, helped perhaps by his determination to appear in a new model. If Ford, through his *Dearborn Independent* and his other agencies, did us any harm, it could not be undone by a few words; if he did us no harm, it would have been well to ignore him. In either case it was clearly the business of a Jewish leadership with taste and dignity to ignore the man after he had made a fool of himself both ways. The publicity genius of David A. Brown determined otherwise. It was a front-page story.

A species of poetic justice, which reflects no credit on those who administered it, was ultimately visited on Mr. Brown. From the place of leadership he dropped with the rapidity of the old German exchange into the obscure position of publisher of *The American Hebrew*. The magic is departed from a name which once delighted and terrorized half of American Jewry. The great men who used Mr. Brown freely, never admitted him into the sacred inner circle, and when the ghost no longer walked, Hamlet himself was undone. But perhaps one crowded hour of glorious life (as a

fellow-poet of Mr. Brown's has sung) was adequate compensation.

The drives for European Jewry and Palestine were only part of the picture in those years. Between 1914 and 1929 there was a great revival in American Jewish life. The money spent on social service, schools, hospitals, asylums and temples doubled and trebled. A building fever set in, for stone is by far the most durable memorial, as well as the most striking evidence, of public generosity. Million-dollar enterprises became common, and small communities ventured into synagogues, centers, Y.M.H.A.'s, which cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. Rabbis were eager to outshine one another in acreage and bricks, and gorgeous structures rose throughout the country. Once or twice mild warnings were issued: what was the good of these superb centers, these imposing places of worship, Saracen, Moorish, semi-Gothic and what not, when we had not developed the teachers? All sorts of stunts were resorted to to justify the buildings; and today a traveller like myself may see these buildings standing idle or used to half capacity, their mortgages weighing heavy on the community. I have known of a Jewish orphan asylum which had to go round looking for orphans in other towns;

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of new temples in communities already overbuilt, of congregations specially created for the justification of a building when there was already a superfluity of rabbis in the community. There was, so to speak, an orgy of reluctant giving. The fever of publicity and banquets had entered the veins of the well-to-do American Jew. He was sated with money, he wanted honors—the finest that money could buy. And the drive-makers proceeded to supply him. The period of 1914-1929 may be called the Great Pyramid Age in American Jewry.

There were good features, too, in the revival, and with these I deal later. But meanwhile the rich man rose to higher and higher spiritual ascendancy. The leaders were those who could give, or get. And to get, a man had to set the example by giving. Therefore the best getters, too, were the rich. Social snobbery, no less than among non-Jews, was a prominent feature of all drives. To get an invitation from Marshall, or Warburg, or Straus, or Rosenwald; to be invited to meet these gentlemen; to be able to shake hands with them—men have paid for these privileges in millions of dollars.

In so much of this, as the reader will see, there is nothing to differentiate Jewish from non-Jewish life; but the fatal distinction is that Jewish public

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life has little else in it. Americanizing Jewry has managed to amalgamate Judaism and Americanism, combining the worst features of both.

In general American life, a more or less articulate opinion holds in partial check—intellectually at least—the megalomania of the rich. Someone will be found to criticize the terms of a charity, a bequest, a public undertaking. The gentle illusion of the rich, who think that by spending money the way they like to they have necessarily performed a public duty and earned the applause of their fellow-citizens, is jolted frequently enough. It is pointed that when a rich man endows a chair at a university he is, as a rule, not making a gift so much as investing in a dugout. His generous contributions to unemployment relief (admittedly accompanied by a warm sympathy) were not unaffected by the consideration that it is better to give freely than to teach the poor how to tax the rich. For the crisis may pass soon, but a lesson of power is not easily forgotten. Recently there was an outcry in America against the practice of paying so heavily in self-respect for the “voluntary” services of the rich. Some wealthy men were invited by President Hoover to give up their lucrative pursuits temporarily and accept honorable but ill-paid

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posts in his government. The general press was convulsed with moral enthusiasm. But there was soon a wide-spread reaction. A number of journalists pointed out that a man with more money than he can use is doing himself a service when he exchanges the routine of his business for the adventure and glory of a high government position. The sense of power which he enjoys in his own enterprise may be more immediate, but his workers have never welcomed him with a salute of twenty-one guns. The protest, be it noted, was uttered by the respectable press. A more ribald but less influential part of the press had much to say about the disappearance of the last camouflage which hid the relations between big business and government.

No protesting minority of either kind is to be found in Americanizing Jewry. The impertinences of the Jewish rich go unrebuked and uncorrected. In the Yiddish press a more self-respecting attitude will be found, but the Yiddish press is not within the purview of this book. Except for the strictures of the Zionists—and their criticisms were suspect because it seemed that they objected not to the rule of the rich but to their non-Zionist or anti-Zionist aims—there is complete silence in the

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English-Jewish press or on the English-Jewish platform. There was no one to tell Louis Marshall that it should be beneath the dignity of the head of American Jewry to defend ticket speculators; or David A. Brown that his publicity buffooneries were degrading a necessary public service into a circus; or Samuel Untermyer, during his brief incursion into Zionism, that a change of heart in regard to his Jewish duties would be more convincing and effective if accompanied by a change of appetite in regard to publicity. Only Israel Zangwill, a visitor, hinted that American Jewry ought not to live "under Marshall law"; and at a semi-private banquet observed (with so much wit that the rebuke was lost) that there did not seem to be a single case of murder and robbery which did not bring Mr. Untermyer's name into prominence. Only in the Yiddish press would Abram Coralnick find room for his brilliant and stinging article on Louis the Nineteenth.

There was no one to point out that the Jewish rich, being to a large extent extruded from the corresponding social life of the gentiles, were compelled to establish their own little hierarchy; that, like the rich of every other people, their donations were the cautious tactical investments

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of a ruling class, the purchase of a badly needed prestige. And because no such opinion found organized expression, the Jewish masses sold themselves more cheaply than any other. Much of the toadying at the banquets and mass-meetings was quite unnecessary. The bargain could have been harder, with benefit to both sides. For though the rich as a class are moved by the considerations I have mentioned, as individuals they are frequently unconscious of their interests, and are genuinely moved by finer motives. Instead of taking advantage of those motives to improve the tone of Jewish public life, rabbis and money-raisers ignored it, and chose to corrupt the takers as well as the givers. It seemed as though the leaders were determined to obtain nothing with dignity, if they could help it.

Sometimes there were amusing set-backs in the process, when the residuum of Jewish culture protested. On one occasion the Zionist leadership tried to import the stark non-Jewish method into Zionist work. A peppy gentleman with a high record for putting things over for the Red Cross and other organizations, was invited to galvanize the Zionist campaign. He gathered the Zionist directors about him and gave them the works. He

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did this several times—with no visible effect beyond a general demoralization of the staff. After a few weeks the high-priced go-getter faded unpeppily from the scene. David A. Brown's brief attempt to put the Zionist campaign over (in the days when the mutual hostility had not reached its hysterical stage) ended in a similar fade-out.

It was among the Zionists, in particular, that some redeeming influences were at work. This may be due in part to the accidental fact that the Zionists could not win the rich to themselves in any case, but much more to the nature of the movement, which prevented its complete adaptation to the method of charity. Through all the inevitable mountebankerries of campaigns and mass-meetings there continued to shine a memorial light of intelligence and culture. There was bound to be plenty of sob-stuff, jingoism and phoney culture. But there was also an appeal to wider issues. There was frequent insistence on the fact that the Jewish problem had to be solved on other than charity lines. Herzlian Zionism, so-called, appealed to the force of public opinion in opposition to the force of the opinionated magnate. Achad Ha-amism, which in effect was the rational re-valuation of Jewish values, had also raised up a school of

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thinkers who were associated with the Zionist movement. The insistence on moral and cultural values was not unattended by some display of them. The striking and informative addresses delivered in Yiddish by Chaim Nachman Bialik, the poet of the regeneration, and by Shmarya Levin, a disciple of Achad Ha-am, were paralleled in English by those of Lipsky, of Weizmann and of Sokolow. This educational work was backed by a printed propaganda which, in the case of the New Palestine, attained a serious level.

The propagandists for Russian colonization and general European relief were in an unfortunate position. Unless they harped on philanthropy, they had to be merely technical, for it was impossible to see a philosophic historical value in relief, or even in rehabilitation. A number of intelligent men were engaged, in secondary capacities, in some of the Relief campaigns; but neither the Relief nor the Zionist audiences (which overlapped a great deal) wanted to hear technical lectures on credit associations, comparative costs of colonization, economic shifts in Europe, statistics, markets, prices, cooperatives and unemployment. In this they were like all audiences, who find specialists boring. The Zionist lecturers, however, could escape

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into political, historical, psychological and cultural discussions of the Jewish problem, and could be interesting without necessarily being misleading. The Relief lecturers always had to return to massacres, starvation, *Kaddish*, the gratitude of the helpless—human enough themes, with nothing instructive about them. It is true that these themes were never absent from Zionist propaganda too; but everything else was absent from Relief propaganda. The able technical expositions of Dr. Rosen for Russian colonization, and of Dr. Ruppin for Palestinian colonization, left the audiences cold. They wanted “human interest” stuff: the Zionist position alone could provide a variety which had some intellectual as well as emotional content.

The Zionist movement made possible a Jewish leadership of men without money, and salaried workers were for a long time the heads of American Zionism. For years the movement could not even boast of regular leaders (as distinguished from picked-up parade pieces) who appealed to the Jewish masses because they had first established a reputation in the non-Jewish world. And while it would be absurd to expect such a movement to be free from money-influence, it is also

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true that for eight years the "monied" men on the administration were not its bosses.

But the pressure toward money ultimately produced its inevitable result. The position of the salaried leader was made untenable. There is not a single salaried leader in Zionism today; and a situation which has been wiped out among all civilized governments is hailed with peculiar satisfaction by the "democratic" Jewish movement. With unmonied men in command, there might have developed an English-speaking labor wing of Zionism in America; that wing remains Yiddish till this day.

The worship of the rich and of the "externally" successful automatically excludes from leadership such men as have given their lives to the study of Jewish matters, and the direction of Jewish affairs. No man can make himself a reputation in the outside world by concentrating exclusively on the Jewish problem. That men who have learned how to make money, and nothing else, should be the directors of Jewish affairs, is too obviously wrong to need much discussion. Those who have distinguished themselves in the non-Jewish field in law or politics or literature can more easily adapt themselves to Jewish leadership of worth.

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But the exclusive preference for such men still indicates that Jews are thinking more of the impression they are making than of the realities they must handle. The American Zionists began to clamor for "known" men: that is, for men who had given most of their lives to a non-Jewish career. This, added to the fatal demand for money at all costs, has lowered the tone of the Zionist movement till it can scarcely be distinguished (except, fortunately, for periodic revolts from below) from other money-raising agencies.

Another factor which cannot be ignored is the change in the Palestinian situation, which called for technicians in increasing number. It was assumed that the ordinary practicalities of a growing country had brought about a fundamentally new position; the impractical men who had made these practicalities possible were to be discarded. It was argued by the Brandeis group that the political phase of Zionism was at an end (they have now reversed their position) and that the Zionist Organization itself was in effect useless. Later, in a curious manner, they hoped to restore the Herzlian glamor and passion to the movement by entrusting it largely to finance corporations.

It is true that hitherto, in all countries, business-

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men have been the effective makers of history, but even they have never made history under the leadership of businessmen. For businessmen are as a rule too busy or too obtuse to formulate a philosophy for themselves. For that purpose they must engage a public relations council in the person of a Webster, a Mussolini, a Pitt. Even a Ghandi will sometimes serve the purpose. But among the Jews the businessmen began to insist on a direct leadership. Russian relief, which claimed to make history only rhetorically, could be managed by businessmen. How was it that the Zionists, who claimed to make history literally, succumbed to this blunder? Some reasons have been touched upon; one of the strongest forces at work was the desire to imitate. Zionism fell under the influence of the "practical man" panic in European and American politics. Businessmen, dissatisfied with the mess in which their leaders had landed them, wanted to take the reins in their own hands. The consequence was the Harding Cabinet, the Hoover fiasco and the whole superb post-war pandemonium.

European Zionism did not follow so rapidly along these lines, and now that comparative poverty will teach American Jewry some humility, it

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may yet condescend to learn method from European Zionism. As pretty an incident as one could invent took place at the Fifteenth Zionist Congress in Basle five years ago. A multimillionaire European Zionist was fussing about the platform while a delegate was speaking. A European Zionist rose on the floor of the Congress to inquire whether the officious gentleman was now one of the secretaries for the Congress; and if not, would the chairman kindly instruct him to get out of the way. An incident of this kind was at all times impossible in American Zionism, and unthinkable in American Jewry outside of it.

This comparative democracy in Zionism provided the only platform for the free criticism of Jewish leadership. But when the Jewish Agency was extended, and Zionists merged with non-Zionists, Marshall and Warburg became sacred cows within the Zionist movement too. But the seal had been set thereby on a process which had been completed within. The extension of the Jewish Agency for Palestine could have been opposed, if at all, on the grounds that the inclusion of the autocratically inclined rich and their toadies was liable to lower the tone of Zionist life. Unfortunately the Zionists had anticipated the danger

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by placing themselves adroitly below the reach of any malign influence. Thus the only genuine objection was removed, and most of the other objections came from insufficient motives. The break-up of the Jewish Agency must be accompanied by a moral regeneration of Zionism; without that, the gesture is empty.

This one disturbing element eliminated, American Jewry may now look for happiness and spirituality and Judaism in the seminaries and synagogues supported by the rich, in the drives made possible by the rich, in the charities, social service, lodge-meetings, better-understanding conferences, anti-defamation committees and patriotic exercises. The rivers of mush have grown soupier and warmer. Charity, too long a disproportionate force in Jewish life, will become the sole force, and Jews will aspire to enter the history of the future on a passport of philanthropy whose visas consist of cancelled checks. Proud of the Jewish name, they still forget that not one philanthropist of the past has taken a front place in our records, and that the most generous donor of public buildings in the ancient world—one Herodius Atticus—has not won himself more mention than Herostratos who set fire to the temple of Diana. Singers and

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poets, soldiers and statesmen, and thinkers, priests, prophets and assassins are to be found in capital letters in the records—the good and the bad mixed. But not the philanthropist as such, for he is neither good nor bad.

This charity mania of the Jews invades their sense of external relationships, too. Instead of seeing the Jewish position in Russia, Poland, Roumania and America in the light of historical and social processes, they ascribe most Jewish misfortunes to our inability to put the appeal across powerfully enough. We have not managed to waken the philanthropic instinct in the non-Jewish national masses. If we had been a little more tactful or eloquent, if we had chosen another spokesman, if we had contributed a little more ostentatiously to churches—in brief, if we had taught others the charitable principles which we ourselves practice, if other nations could be made to see history as we pretend to see it, our plight would be much easier. The monied Jew, being unable to think of anything more powerful than money, can think of nothing more convincing than giving it away. If such an example fails to impress the world, there is no hope for humanity.

CHAPTER SIX

Jewish Leadership

DURING the greater part of their exile the Jews have been concerned mostly with the maintenance of a theoretical status quo. Can a people which has lived by adaptability rather than by action have produced "historic" leaders? Were the spokesmen of the Jewish people, its symbols to the outside and the inside world, anything other than representative figures?

These are the points to be considered before we speak of Jewish leadership.

It is wrong to assume that the Jews have been merely the passive playthings of outside forces. Their adaptability was prehensile as well as responsive. They flowed from country to country under the pressure of persecution; but they also

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kept outposts in various countries and, being more sensitive than others to the economic layout, also moved of their own accord. And yet they had no concept of an organic history of their own. Their concern was to make a living and preserve their Judaism. History had ceased for them with the expulsion, and it would be restored with the apocalyptic restoration. To hold what they had in the way of tradition, losing nothing and gaining nothing, to *keep going* until the Lord would relieve them, was the sum of their philosophy.

There is an important distinction to be observed between motion and evolution, between change of location and change of structure. The former is accident, the latter is history. If we consider the position of the Jews in the sixth or seventh century, and compare it with their position in the sixteenth or seventeenth, we become aware of a strange inner immobility, a similarity in everything but geography and other externals. The religion had undergone minor changes, due to additions. New philosophies had been added to the old, great scholars and great poets had expanded the literature of interpretation. New vernaculars had been adopted. New persecutions had been experienced, and the general condition

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of the Jews with relation to the outside world had undergone a change for the worse. The economic distribution within the people was different. But these were changes in degree and not in kind. The Jewish people was still an exiled, sundered, fragmented section of humanity, in some places persecuted, in some tolerated, in some welcomed. Light and shadow were distributed in different proportions, but the pattern was essentially the same. If we take even a wider sweep, including in our range the beginnings of Christianity and the full tide of the Renaissance, we are still unaware of an organic change. A new religion had taken deep root in the world without altering in essentials the attitudes of rulers and masses toward the Jewish people. No new technique of action had been discovered; no structural evolution had taken place.

I speak here of the spirit as much as of the form. A Roman of the time of Cato awakening in the time of Severus would have been aware of something more than changes in territory, numbers, wealth. The *feel* of his people would have been different to him. Time itself had been at work. But a Jew of the time of Rabbi Ashi awakening in the time of Menasseh ben Israel would only

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have had many new details to learn. The *feel* of his people was the same. Time had not been at work on the Jewish people. It had not grown older; it had not moved along a curve, but along a straight line. I am not alluding here to the similarity of law and religion, to the unchanged personnel of delegations to rulers, to the sameness of schools, curricula and social service, but to the atmosphere within the people. True history is the molecular transposition which we call growth and decay, the patterning of hopes, fears and energies which are measures of a deep change of personality. The exhaustion, disillusionment and world-weariness of later epochs in a people's life were not to be observed in the Jews after the lapse of a thousand years.

Seen romantically, a leader is one who initiates and directs a forward turning in the history of a people. Seen semi-realistically he symbolizes and dramatizes the event. He is a maker of history, then, only to the extent that he serves as a focus of consciousness at a time of creative change. He helps the masses to strengthen their own morale and their will to action. But in the idiom of thought of our time a leader is an illusory though inevitable by-product.

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Historic changes have never taken place in the absence of leaders. But the reverse is also true. Where there is no change there is no leadership in the accepted sense of that word. Uniform motion in a straight line (such was the Jewish) needs no new impulse, and implies no change in the kinetic energy. The great figures which have appeared among the Jews until very recently cannot be called leaders. They were representatives *not* in a time of change.

To these great Jews we do nevertheless give the name of leaders, loosely, not appreciating the special rôle they played. A Jewish leader in the diaspora was a focus of Judaism. He was an intellectual and cultural example. He did not simply advocate Judaism; he lived it. The manner of his being rather than of his action made him a "leader." The activities of men like Rabbenu Gershom or Meir of Rothenburg—administrators as well as teachers—resemble leadership externally. But the significance of the men was in the intensity with which their personal lives mirrored the cultural tradition. The houses of such men might in a sense be called *salons*—except that the special feelings of snobbery and preciousity were quite absent. It was considered normal that

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the home of the good Jew should be a meeting place for the wise—in keeping with an ancient injunction. Study was not less a part of its routine than meals and prayers. The influence of these leaders might be compared to the electric field round a highly charged body.

In their negotiations with the outside world such leaders could speak with the authority of their intenser participation in Jewishness. In this they differed from the modern *Shtadtlan*. The *Shtadtlan* was a Jew of influence who used his connections to obtain favors for the Jewish people, or a section of it. He was not elected. He was responsible to no one, except his own class, and sometimes not to that. But the modern *Shtadtlan* (of the type of Cremieux, Montefiore, Marshall) derived no authority from a specific Jewish status. His influence in the outside world was that of wealth, connections and non-Jewish reputation. He might be Orthodox or Reform, he might travel with two sets of dishes or keep only one set even at home; except for his power with the outside world, he could have done nothing for the inside world of the Jews.

In the majority of cases it was wealth which made possible the influence of the modern *Shtadtlan*; and because he had not the implicit backing

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of the old kind of significance among the Jews, he became a class rather than a Jewish representative. On the one hand he presented his particular view of the needs of the Jews to rulers and councils; on the other hand he told the Jews how they ought to respond. There was no check on him at either end, and he could not check himself. As a member of the richer classes he was bound to identify, in all righteousness, the well-being of the rich with the well-being of Judaism. Public-spirited, self-sacrificing, he was as definitely a member of a class as was the gentile ruler.

The *Shtadtlan* ruled as long as there was no modern democratic awakening in the Jewish masses. When that came, in the second half of the nineteenth century, the tug of war began. Then, very definitely, Judaism divided into two branches—Judaism of the rich and Judaism of the poor. Reform Judaism was the special camp of the rich—but Orthodoxy did not necessarily remain the camp of the poor. Rich Orthodoxy and rich Reform joined hands above the heads of the poor. The Orthodox rich were the opponents of Zionism not less than the Reform rich. Each had its own “theology” to justify its stand; but they shared a common realistic reason.

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Rich Jews, obtaining favors from gentile rulers, for themselves and for their people, had to have a docile and obedient Jewry to deliver. It will hardly be believed today that in the darkest era of the Russian persecutions of Jewry, in the era of government-planned pogroms, the rich Jews of Russia, themselves secure in person and property, opposed Zionism as a stain on the Jewish reputation for patriotism! For a detailed and vivid historical analysis of the unconscious duplicity of these leaders I refer the interested to Shmarya Levin's autobiography. Here I can only make brief reference to the fact in order to illustrate what occurred when the Jewish *Shtadtlan* had ceased to be an integral part of the folk and its ways.

But the democratic awakening among the Jewish masses suffered from the same evil, and from another hardly less disastrous. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries a new concept of democracy had awakened among the freer masses of the Western world—the concept which displaces the “leader” with the “process.” Historic forces, gathering in the seas of humanity, set up its waves; the leader is thrown up from the depths, himself a product of the uncontrollable. Strangely enough, this concept corresponds to the Jewish actuality of

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the past. But the rôle of the new concept in history is to make the common man conscious of his own worth, and to free him from the hypnotic influence of the leader who, as an individual, may even be struggling against the rôle he has assumed.

With a certain section of modern Jewry, within the Zionist field, modern democracy was accepted—and mingled with an ancient and outworn adoration of the significance of the leader. The marvelous figure of Theodore Herzl is the best illustration. This brilliant and unbalanced person is regarded as the founder of “modern political Zionism,” and as the prototype of the modern Jewish democratic leader. But the truth is that Herzl first attempted to work through the Jewish rich, and failed, and that he turned to the masses only as an afterthought. It is also true that he never understood the sources of the Zionist movement, because he had no access to them. He thought of Zionism in terms of uncultural sociology. He did not know that he was dealing with an ancient tradition which could not be deflected from its course; his attempt to substitute Uganda for Palestine even as a temporary shift proves this. And whatever the word “political” really means, we do know this: that the strength of the Zionist

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movement before and after him lay mainly in those Jewish masses which had moved up to the right point, and were active two decades before his appearance.

To this day it is Russian Zionism that dominates the movement, the Zionism that rose almost anonymously, and was "led" by Jews steeped in tradition. Even the crippling of Russian Jewry has not altered the fact, for the stamp is laid forever on the Jewish homeland.

Herzl was a gifted realist of the sixteenth century, operating in the nineteenth and twentieth. Or he was a poet of the nineteenth attempting to operate in the sixteenth. His conversations with Abdul Hamid, as recorded in his diaries, are a terrifying admixture of cunning and absurdity. Without a thousand dollars in the Zionist treasury, he talked of hundreds of millions to the Sultan. He interviewed princes, barons and magnates. He waylaid the last German Emperor in Palestine, and accounted this a significant victory. He dreamed of Palestine in terms of electricity, uniforms, duels, Viennese cafés and prizes for large families. He used a religious freak and a Polish adventurer for his secret-service staff. And he labored with incredible industry to hold together his curious or-

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ganization, to arrange its congresses in gala style (evening dress for decorum—and he persuaded Nordau to change from mufti), to convince individuals, to impress the world, and to bring about a miracle.

Zionism would have been today practically what it is without the coming of Herzl. Without him the first Jewish workers would have gone to Palestine after the first Russian revolution—as without him the first settlers went twenty years before. Without him the later generation of leaders would have arisen; without him the longing of Jewish masses would have pressed in the same direction. The illusion of his rôle was—as is the case with all leaders—produced by his unique personality.

But without him, too, parts of the Zionist movement would have turned into replicas of the mob-spirit of other peoples. Because of his devotion and irresistible personal appeal, he became forever the symbol of creative Zionism. Because of his complete alienation from Jewish tradition he also became the symbol of mob-Zionism. The distrust felt by Achad Ha-am for Herzl was grounded in a deep consciousness that Herzl represented, among other things, the will to a Jewish Palestine that need not be Jewish at all.

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Not all those who have become mob-Zionists are necessarily ignorant of the Jewish tradition; but the mass which constitutes this aspect of the movement has defected from *the Jewish attitude toward the meaning of a people*. The democratic concept has reached a point where numbers alone are supposed to be significant, and where attendant values (the cultural value in this case), are ignored. The view has been best formulated by Ferrero: "In Europe and America universal suffrage is the triumph of the masses, of number, of quantity. This collective sovereign is a kind of monster, with an enormous body, a small head, paws that are sometimes sharp; a monster which is accustomed to wallow in heavy slumber, and let itself be docilely led like a lamb by a child. Nevertheless, it is sometimes seized by fits of fury; it bellows, it bites, it belches flames; and the hardest tamers are unsuccessful in calming it. Its intelligence is as limited as a child's; to make it understand anything, you must simplify—even questions which are comprehensible only in their complexity. It is easily dazzled, easily deceived, even easily astonished, but it has got into its head a vague conviction that it is all-powerful, a notion fostered by its ignorance. It has no idea of the chains of bronze

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that bind the actions of men in this wretched world enslaved to causality; it easily imagines that error, folly, ignorance, waste, produce none of the consequences of which they admit; it willingly allows itself to be carried by its illusions and by the rhetoric of its admirers into a dream world where the mere wishing for a thing is sufficient for its realization."

That such a tone could come into Jewish and Zionist life as a misunderstanding of the meaning of democracy is not to be marvelled at, for it is an evil which permeates the whole world. But that it should be identified with "being Jewish" as such cannot be tolerated on intellectual and historic grounds. The discipline of Jewish culture was for a long time a specific against this development, and may again assert itself curatively. But the phenomenon as such runs parallel with the loss of the old Jewish meaning of leadership: association of action with being.

CHAPTER SEVEN

American Jewish Leaders

OUTSIDE of the Zionists, the first place—almost without a second—in American Jewish leadership belonged to Louis Marshall. His prestige among the Jews was immense, being derived from his commanding position in American life as a lawyer and authority on the Constitution. He was deeply concerned with the preservation of Jewish cultural values and indefatigable in his defense of Jewish rights. But of the former he had only a smattering; and the latter he regarded as something to be entrusted to the skill of the *Shtadtlan*. Jewish culture was a trifling addition to his personal life, not an essential; a matter of occasional adornment and enjoyment and quotation, not a continuous and organic necessity. Jewish

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rights he regarded less as something inherent in the Jewish masses than as a payment made by the world—when made at all—in deference to a special principle.

He was curiously aware of the failure of the religious instruments of American Jewish life. He said once at a conference: "I often hear people ask why young men and women desert the synagogue, especially if they have gone through four years of college. The reason is that they are intelligent; they are serious-minded upon subjects which they regard as important. A young man or woman who goes to a house of worship and listens to words, words, words which scarcely ever precipitate an idea, who hears all kinds of sermons about Judaism but hears nothing which *is* Judaism—such a person goes and studies philosophy or something else..." And yet the brand of Judaism which he practiced was of the excruciatingly dull variety of Reform. A leader in the Schechter Seminary of Conservative Judaism, he felt personally more at home in Temple Emanuel, and listened without protest to the sermons of Nathan Kress. He dissociated himself from the Zionist movement for fear of its "political" implications. Not that it did him much good; the press was always blundering

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into something near the subconscious truth, referring to him as a Zionist. But his unreasonable fretfulness about the quality of our Americanism—or rather, about the perception of it by the non-Jews—crippled his relationship to Jewry.

Marshall was among the few Reform leaders who knew Yiddish, and therefore had a first hand contact with the Yiddish press; yet he was never in touch with the healthier spirit of the masses. In the famous case of Schwarzbard, the watchmaker who assassinated Petlura (the bloodiest pogromist of modern times—a twentieth century Chmelnitzki), Marshall was opposed to the popular demonstrations in favor of the avenger, and openly repudiated them. It was with misgivings that he watched the growth, in America, of a democratic instrument of action called the American Jewish Congress. When, under popular pressure, he did ally himself with the Committee of Jewish delegations in Paris, at the Peace Conference, he was not in his element. And when, later, the American Jewish Congress decided to perpetuate itself for the further defense of Jewish rights throughout the world, he left it.

The theory of national minority rights in European countries must have been essentially repug-

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nant to Marshall, especially when it was applied to the Jews. A reactionary in American politics, a Federalist Republican with patriotic views on the centralization of authority, he could not have felt at home among the European members of the Committee of Jewish Delegations, who regarded themselves as members of a distinct Jewish nationality. At the most important crisis in Jewish affairs, he did not play the leading rôle; the negotiations concerning Palestine were in the hands of the Zionists, and they too spoke nationalism. It has been said that the best thing Marshall did in Paris at that time was to order an American anti-Zionist rabbi out of the city under threat of mayhem to his career.

The attitude of Marshall toward Palestine was, as I have stated, much more positive than that of the Reform Jewry which he represented. But his creative influence was small, and all his attempts to inject a Palestinian enthusiasm into his followers failed. It could not be otherwise; for Zionism came out of the Jewish masses, and Marshall the autocrat was suspicious of the sources of the very movement which appealed to him. He could not tolerate the uncontrollable. He also knew that his power with Reform Jewry depended on the tacit

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understanding that he would not outrun his followers. The demand of the Zionists that the Jewish people take matters into their own hands, choosing their leaders instead of accepting them, and Marshall's own long association with the negative attitude of Reform, were the two factors which made his work for Palestine largely barren.

But this failure was true of every Reform leader who made the same attempt. For the leadership in this direction was in the hands of the Zionists. Such changes as came about in the attitude of Reform Jews toward Palestine were due, perhaps, neither to the Zionists nor to the Reform leadership. They were due rather to an inner revolt against the bore-someness of Reform, a half conscious realization that the famous Jewish Emancipation was not what it had been represented to be, a growing hunger for something more than a colorless theology as the Jewish rallying center. The American growth toward Zionism has only just begun, and it can be influenced little by propaganda, which only serves to clarify the intentions of those who are already convinced by inner need. Marshall could have become a Zionist leader; he could not be any kind of leader as long as he merely kept pace with Reform. The furtive Zionism called non-Zionism,

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which is a feature of neo-Reform Judaism, must go a long way before it can give birth to leadership.

There is something tragic in the fact that nothing remains of Marshall but the bare memory of his life and actions. He left no tradition behind him; he left no distinctive institution, no impulse (even divorced from an institution) to identify his contribution to Jewish life. His personality was not the kind to give birth to legend and to form the nucleus at least of an attributed leadership. The one organization which he founded, together with Weizmann (the Jewish Agency for Palestine), is falling to pieces. Marshall was able, hard-working, imperious, devoted; this is all that can be recorded.

On the death of Marshall in 1929 the titular leadership in American Reform Jewry reverted to Felix Warburg, apparently without the consent of the latter. Warburg is much less of a leader than Marshall. Kindly, cultured, artistic, timid, anxious to be of help, he is even more suspicious than Marshall of the will of the masses. Nor is he as vigorous as Marshall was in finding some other instrument of action. As Marshall wanted to do it through a committee, as Stephen S. Wise would do it through a speech, Warburg would prefer to settle

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it with a donation. And if not a donation, then an invitation and a quiet conversation at tea. Once at least he received a lesson in the futility of this method: namely, when the British Prime Minister invited him to his home, talked to him soothingly on Jewish rights in Palestine and, having kept him quiet for a few days, proceeded to strip the Mandate of most of its purpose. On that one occasion Warburg did issue a powerful statement which sounded as though it came from a leader. But he could not follow it up. Within a few weeks after the promulgation of the White Paper of 1930, he was once more showing his soft, accommodating nature.

Felix Warburg could, like his brother Paul, have confined himself to finance. That he did not do so speaks much for his sense of duty. But he lacks the first requisite even of secondary leadership like Marshall's, which is the ruthless will to lead. He suffers deeply at the sight of indifference to Jewish troubles, but only on one occasion did he give public utterance to his disgust with the well-fed, vulgar self-sufficiency of so many of the Jewish well-to-do. At a Jewish club in Brooklyn, where he addressed a meeting, he spoke with almost prophetic rage of the members who stuck to their card-games in the

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other rooms, unaffected by the bloody problem which had made the meeting necessary and by his own presence in the building. But though his heart is in the right place, he is much too much the aristocratic gentleman to play the scold or even the inspirer.

Above all, he makes the impression of wishing he were well out of it. His resignation from the administration of the Jewish Agency provided him with a good excuse; he has refused to resume his position. If only there were no Jewish problem; or if only the Jewish problem would not spill over into popular movements; if only he could do his bit by giving generously of his money, and quietly of his advice. He will join a conference, or a committee; but it disturbs him to have wild men screaming through the keyhole.

The outstanding popular leader in American Jewry is Rabbi Stephen Samuel Wise, a very extraordinary figure. This man has all the requisites of leadership, the will to lead, in the first place. He knows how to keep himself in the public eye, being a master of publicity. Like Marshall, he is a tremendous worker, but unlike Marshall he has a steady relationship of intimate affection to the masses. He is a good mixer, and a magnifi-

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cent hater. Wise is often accused of being a demagogue, but the accusation is false. A demagogue is one whose will to lead is conscienceless as well as ruthless, but Wise can go into exile when his views compel it. Though Zionist leadership is very precious to him, he can tell a Zionist convention to be damned (or that it is already damned, which is the same thing).

In action he is a terrific, leonine figure, as none can forget who saw him at the Philadelphia Relief Conference in 1925. He has a fine knack for coining smashing phrases, or for quoting annihilating sentences from the Bible. At the Zionist conference of 1925, in Baltimore, he admitted that Russian colonization might be cheaper than Palestinian, but, he said: "We will not stoop to bargain at the counter of redemption." The audience uttered a gasp and rose up to yell itself hoarse. In an interview with Mayor Walker of New York, he heard the latter defend himself somewhat as follows: "As even the leaders of the other party advised me that I ought to raise my own salary, what should I have answered?" Rabbi Wise: "You should have answered, 'Is thy servant a dog that he should do this thing?'"

The oratory of Wise, at its best, leaves that of

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Abba Hillel Silver, his nearest rival, nowhere. For though Wise has all the platform mannerisms to a degree (not excluding the regulation pulpit roguishness) he is altogether too genuine not to forget himself completely. Subject to flaming generousities and indiscretions, he transcends his oratorical training, and catches at the inmost, unuttered needs of his audience; so that at moments it may be said of him that a people takes shelter in his voice. Where his deep emotions make him dramatic, lesser men who ape him are merely theatrical. But another characteristic divides him from the young prototype of Reform rabbinism: Wise has used himself up with the utmost recklessness. He has flung himself into Jewish public life without regard for nerves and body. The cosy life of the priest, recalling the smug, beefy ecclesiastic of parody, is not for him; and whatever other egoisms he has in common with all leaders, a cautious attitude toward career, comfort and a well-lined old age is not among them.

Wise has set a bad example by his versatility, and has encouraged other rabbis to look for their support to their non-Jewish sidelines. American Zionists in particular need to learn that the best Jewish leadership must come from concentration

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on Jewish affairs. It is impossible to tell where Wise will break out next: war work, labor disputes, Gandhi, city corruption and even religion. Granted that Jews should and must take an active part in civic life, they cannot aspire to leadership in two fields. On one occasion at least, Wise did get more publicity than he bargained for, namely, when a routine sermon on Jesus as a Jewish figure made the front pages in a silly season, and sundry Jews saw their opportunity to raise a scare; for a short time it looked as though he would lose his chairmanship of the Palestine campaign.

Of the political implications of actions, Wise seems to understand nothing. He is liberal in America; but at a Zionist Congress he can ally himself with the Revisionists—the storm centers of mob-Zionism and mob-Judaism—in what he considers a clever move. He will permit his name to appear on a book called *The Great Betrayal*—an arraignment of Great Britain for her actions in Palestine—without severing his official connections with the Zionist organization so that his colleagues might reap whatever advantage they can from his denunciation. He would like to fulminate and negotiate at the same time, break off diplomatic relations at the front door and continue them *not*

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at the back door. He can burst into absurd attacks on Russia, because of the pressure against Judaism and Zionism in that country, not remembering that the prime movers in the persecutions are the Jewish Communists, and not remembering, or never realizing, that the Communist steamroller must either flatten out certain aspects of Jewish life or else stop moving. He has thundered out in public that it would almost be better for the Jews to have the régime of the Romanoffs back. His attempt to distinguish between Communism as such and the incidental destruction of the old Jewish social, cultural and religious life, is childish. It is evident that he has no philosophy of social processes, and his treatment of present-day problems is out of touch with our times: his utterances on them are stately but irrelevant, like a grandfather's clock striking twelve at half past two.

The most serious anomaly in Wise's career, the one that has harmed him most, is the fact that he is a rabbi. It is difficult to reconcile the vigorous, adventurous public worker with the minister who conducts Sunday services in Carnegie Hall. Granted that while the political ecclesiastic is an anachronism among other peoples, he is still an actuality in Jewish life (for the Jewish religion is a national

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policy), there is still a difference between a rabbi, and a leader who seems at times to aspire to the Presidency of the World Zionist Organization. On the non-Jewish side of his work, certainly, his religious functions give a queer touch to Wise's work; a special tone, the echo of the organ perhaps, is bound to pervade his utterances. This is all the more unfortunate because there is nothing sanctimonious about the man. On the Jewish side, he fails to represent the secularization of Jewish cultural values which has brought Judaism into the stream of modern thought. Yet it must be admitted that without the rabbinate, a Jewish career might have been closed to Wise. His social liberalism, too, suffers in reputation. The Church may try hard to represent a creative social understanding, but it will succeed in very few cases; namely, when it happens not to be the church of a governing class. But Liberal and Reform Judaism is, unfortunately, the religion of a governing class. The balance between the rich and poor is not maintained at Reform conventions, because the poor are not represented there. In these circumstances a double difficulty prevents Wise from being what he genuinely desires to be: a lay leader of Jewish

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life, and a liberal social force in American life at large.

His influence on the younger generation has been of a mixed character. On the one hand, his unceasing generosity to all creative forces (as long as they do not threaten his leadership) has drawn toward him many able rabbis who were not educated in his seminary, and many lay figures, too. On the other hand his success has inspired a number of younger men to issue in ludicrous caricatures of him. He has a style that can be parodied; unfortunately the passion of conviction can not. In the democratization of Jewish life in America, in detaching the hold of the self-appointed from the reins of Jewish affairs, he has been the foremost individual force of his time. Working always through constitutional bodies like the Zionist Organization, and the American Jewish Congress, he has been the symbol of the prominent Jew who could have made a Jewish career through other alliances, but preferred to obtain his mandate from the Jewish masses. In this sense his contribution toward the political education of the Jews has been unique.

A meteor flashed across the Jewish sky, rising over Boston and fading out over Washington. Louis

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D. Brandeis, who is considered the ablest Jew in America, promised for a few years to take the position of a second Herzl in American and world Jewry. Between 1914 and 1920 he was not merely in the position to assume this leadership—it was repeatedly and vehemently offered to him. His prestige, after his appointment to the Supreme Court, was higher even than Marshall's. His entry into Zionism had been dramatic and providential; it took place at the moment when the outbreak of the World War had left the world Zionist Organization in fragments, and the outlook was blacker than it has ever been since. When the War ended, the Balfour Declaration had been won; America had assumed her unique position among the world powers, and American Jewry a corresponding position in world Jewry. It looked then as though Brandeis was a man of destiny for Zionism and Jewry.

He fumbled at the leadership and lost it, but exactly how it happened is not clear. On the surface the quarrel with the European leaders and with the American rank and file was over method; but beneath this difference of method lay originating differences of outlook. Brandeis, like Herzl, did not understand the cultural-emotional sources

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of Zionism. The latter showed this when he attempted to switch the movement (though only for tactical purposes, he insisted) toward Uganda instead of Palestine; the former showed it when he began to tamper with what was called diaspora nationalism. Zionism exists, as a matter of fact, for the strengthening of the Jewish morale throughout the world, and whether that morale is called diaspora nationalism or religion or cultural consciousness does not matter; it must not be touched on any of its facets. The magic personality of Herzl did not save him from defeat on this point, and only his premature death kept the defeat from being fatal to his historic rôle. Brandeis, without Herzl's personality, lived to carry through the fight to the end. His practicality, superior to that of Herzl, was too rigid to adapt itself to the historic attitude of the Jews. His Zionism was even more sociological than that of Herzl, but it did not come to him like a fierce, poetic inspiration; he saw it instead as a logical, commendable plan. Other factors enter into his loss of the leadership. He would not, or could not, resign from the bench in order to become the Jewish leader. He was, in fact, in a difficult position; he was one of the minority of liberals in the Supreme Court. His resignation would have looked

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like the betrayal of a great trust, and though we cannot presume to look into the man's conscience, we can see that no amount of method could replace that single-mindedness of purpose, that complete absorption in Jewish hopes, which was shown by Weizmann. There was, in addition, a paradox to be faced. Brandeis derived much of his prestige from the bench; in leaving it to take up the Zionist leadership he would have sacrificed one of the major sources of his power. In an indirect way his case illustrates the evil of Jewish demand for leadership among men who have made their reputations outside of Jewish affairs.

After his defeat in 1921, when the rank and file of American Zionists, with the help of European Zionist leaders, removed his representatives from office (or, rather, made their position as leaders untenable) he continued to work for Palestine along his cherished plans of private initiative. Detached now from the body of the movement, he found himself almost impotent. One by one the men who stood by him (the Brandeis group) found themselves drawn back into the current of the movement. They entered it, admittedly, to bring back his spirit, and his private leadership. But the refusal or inability of Brandeis to step into the

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open made his relationship to the Zionist masses more and more tenuous. He became a sort of legend. There were times when the relationship was actually grotesque. A man sat in Washington and issued instructions and advice. The public did not know what this advice consisted of. Jacob de Haas carried letters around in his pocket, and whispered among delegates . . . Brandeis wants this, Brandeis wants that. . . . The delegates became irreverent, and finally asked: "Well, why the hell doesn't he come and tell us?"

The situation was beneath the dignity of such a man, and certainly beneath the dignity of his motives. A silly phrase was invented by his adherents: "Silent leadership." But this inaudible leadership left the Zionists without a representative to the external world; and Zionism having a political façade among others, Brandeis actually reduced himself to the position of advisory technical expert. On the occasion of his seventy-fifth birthday the general press, in reviewing his life and interests, had little to say about what is presumably a major motive in his life. The articles in the *New York Times Magazine*, the *Nation*, and other important periodicals, made no mention of his Zionism at all. This is the natural echo of silence. To those who know the at-

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titude of Brandeis—but only to those, unfortunately—the word “presumably,” used above, might be offensive. For the interest is real, deep and abiding. It manifests itself in constant and detailed analysis of Palestinian affairs, in offers of good advice, in cooperation with committees, in the raising of money. All this is good. But it is not leadership; and it makes almost incomprehensible the struggle between Brandeis and Weizmann in 1921.

Only recently did Brandeis write openly to the Zionist Convention, clarifying the situation by disassociating himself from the partisan struggle. But even if he were willing to step into the open, the Justice is no longer the vigorous figure that he was in 1921. He has allowed a decade to elapse, a fateful period, with a thick screen between himself and the Zionist masses. Its partial removal now cannot undo the effect of ten years of estrangement.

A new leadership was created by the break of 1921, and the Zionist movement proved itself strong enough to carry on capably without borrowed prestige. Louis Lipsky, the head of the movement between 1921 and 1930, had abandoned a promising career as dramatic critic and writer to devote himself entirely to Jewish matters. He was unknown to the outside world. To the Zionists he

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was known as one of the most constant workers; it was only in 1921, when he placed himself at the head of the rebels against the Brandeis group, that he emerged as a national figure.

Lipsky has all the abilities which go into leadership except one—the will to dominate. No other man in American Zionism has awakened such fanatical loyalties and enmities. No other American Zionist understands as well as he the problems of organization and the appeal to the masses. He is an expert manipulator of men, and the greatest artist at the management of conventions that Zionists have ever seen. Lipsky's cool, good-humored, purposeful and quick-witted handling of convention crowds is worth watching without relation to the aims of the movement. His convention addresses, in fact the majority of his speeches, are unlike anything else to be heard in Jewish public life. They are powerful without being oratorical; they have structure, content and finish, and they read as well as they sound.

The bohemian, artistic streak in his nature unfits him for the higher pomposities of public life. He must be bludgeoned into evening dress. He is extraordinarily shy. He has no gift for publicity, accepting what comes his way with discomfort, and

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never exerting himself to "create news values," as the unctuous phrase goes. He was pushed into the presidency of the Zionist Organization of America and he was pushed into the World Zionist Executive. But he could not be pushed out of the presidency; he stepped down of his own will.

Lipsky is the only theoretician that American Zionism has produced, but his concern is mostly with the diaspora aspect of Zionism. Palestine is to him an expression of the Jewish will, but the Jewish will is outside of Palestine. His mind is concerned chiefly with the dignity of Jewish life where it is lived at present, and he sees Zionism as the logical necessity of a dignified Jewishness. His contact with Jewish life is immediate, for he is an authority on the Yiddish drama, and knows the Jewish masses intimately. For this reason he was the right leader for the rebellion against the opponents of diaspora nationalism. A perfect combination would have been Brandeis-Lipsky, the former for the building of Palestine, the latter for the organization of diaspora Jewry.

Other figures have hovered around the leadership of Jewish life in America. Any Jew who has donated largely to charity or other funds can make a bid. The Fleishhacker who built the baths in San

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Francisco, or the Lewisohn who donated the stadium in New York, has only to stretch out a hand. In fact, it is somewhat curious that more candidates have not appeared. At one time Samuel Untermyer threatened to enter the arena, and he spoke with pathos of the increasing importance of Zionism to his declining years. But he has suffered either a rejuvenescence or a change of heart.

Leadership in American Jewry has been largely futile for one reason I have indicated: the divorce of the leaders from the sources of the folk culture, and for a second which is the modern counterpart to the first: an alienation from the social thought of the time. Without being Jewish enough, the leaders have been largely nineteenth century and romantic. Only one side of Zionism has been alert—the national. But the reinterpretation of nationalism in economic terms has hardly begun. The addresses which Jewish leaders deliver before student bodies, *Avukah*, or *Menorah*, or the like, harp continuously on religion, loyalty, culture tradition, without either containing any of these values (as Marshall complained) or touching on the quick the modern outlook, the forces which occupy the attention of intelligent young men and women. Jewish student intellectuals do not belong to Jewish bodies except

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for social reasons or because of pressure. Whether they call themselves radicals or atheists or internationalists, they know that they must look outside of Jewish movements for the data of modern thought.

It is admittedly difficult to make economics and social theory the substance of emotional leadership; but leadership must be tacitly saturated with them. It will not do to speak to Jews merely of tradition, without indicating that the need for this tradition is woven into physical actualities of a character which is recognized today. The concept of Jewish values as ethereal inspirations in their origin and application, of Jewish intellectuality as something detached from the pressure of world events, has something perverse about it. Either the will to conserve Jewish cultural values touches the daily life, and springs from a healthy instinct of self-preservation, or else it is the luxury of a handful of dilettanti.

The value of being Jewish must, in other words, have a meaning in terms of the struggle for existence. It must be linked with considerations of the economic position of the Jew. It need not be exclusively economic; but it cannot survive as pure romanticism. Zionism has never contemplated the removal of more than a fraction of the Jewish peo-

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ple into Palestine. Even Herzl spoke of Jews who would not wish to migrate to a Jewish homeland. What organizational, sociological, useful values are there for Jews in Jewish ideas, traditions and values? On these questions the American leadership is silent. And since it does not by example inspire a desire to imitate, and by high enjoyment whet the appetites of others, contenting itself with doing things for the Jews without being Jewish, it cannot make itself the center of creative forces in Jewish life.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The General Picture

A PREMATURE greatness was thrust upon America by the outcome of the World War. Her ultimate supremacy was inevitable; time was on her side; but how much better it would have been if this supremacy had ripened through two or three generations, so that her world consciousness might have been touched not only with destiny but with a more tolerant feeling of human community.

A premature greatness was thrust upon American Jewry too. Four million immigrants and children of immigrants suddenly found themselves the hope and patron of world Jewry. They had barely come to from the shock of arrival and adjustment, and already they were the richest Jewish group in the history of the world—at a time when more than

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five-sixths of remaining Jewry was involved in ruin. They could not help feeling superior. Either Providence had rescued them from the European débâcle to be the saviors of the Jewish name, or else they had been clever enough, they or their fathers, to anticipate disaster. In either case, they could not wholly suppress the suspicion that they were of the elect. Obscurely, in the midst of their pity, they felt that the Jews of Europe were *schlimihls*: they were unlucky, *organically* unlucky, unlucky by constitution. Yes, the Jews of Europe had produced scholars and academies and traditions—but they were tainted, too, with the mediævalism of Europe. They had not the snap and initiative of American Jews. Of course they could not be blamed for their misfortunes—God forbid. But millions of beggars are millions of beggars. There is something vaguely significant about helplessness and demoralization. In the mind of American Jewry the unacknowledged thought must have resembled Sholom Aleichem's famous bull: "God hates a poor man—otherwise he wouldn't be poor."

The very formulation of this attitude naturally constitutes an exaggeration. The feeling was much more diffuse. The merest hint at it was met with passionate denial. And yet—American Jewry did

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not understand (as America did not understand in the case of Europe as a whole) that Jewish history is something outside of books, a weaving of lives and events, out of which the individual or the group cannot be lifted clear by effort of will. American Jewry felt in European Jewry a faint acquiescence in the backwardness, the muddle-headedness, of its surroundings. And there was, in all the compassion and helpfulness, a tinge of astonishment, even of irritation.

At its extreme this emotion was symbolized by the behavior of Henry Morgenthau in Poland. In 1919 he was appointed to head a pogrom investigation commission. The incident of the commission was itself dramatic in the extreme. It concentrated in a gesture the rise of America and the corresponding rise of American Jewry. To the Jews of Poland the coming of Morgenthau was much more a spiritual than a political event. They knew well enough that America could do little to influence the course of Polish history—that had to run its own course, more or less; and though, especially at that time, there was a tendency to exaggerate the force of “the public opinion of the civilized world,” the Jewish newspapers understood the organic character of the problem. Morgenthau, the emissary of

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America and of American Jewry, stood for the solidarity of the Jewish people, as well as for its unconquerable energy and will-power. One thing the Jews of Poland did expect from him: the understanding which springs from sympathy, and the sympathy which springs from the feeling that Polish Jewry and American Jewry are parts of one whole, a people which cannot suffer in a part without suffering in its totality. At this moment Polish Jewry was bearing the pain of world Jewry, as American Jews was demonstrating its immortality.

Morgenthau came. He investigated. And he gave advice. He pointed out to audience after audience that the Jews of America got along excellently with their neighbors because they knew how. "Look at us," he said over and over again. He told the Jews of Poland that what they needed was: to be patriotic, patient and up-to-date. They had to love Poland, heart and soul, as Jews everywhere had to love their fatherland. He forgot that yesterday the Jews of Poland had had to love Russia. He forgot that the Jews of Vilna (where he repeated this sermon) did not know yet whether they were going to love Lithuania heart and soul, or Poland. He forgot that Lemberg had been Austrian the day before, and that it might yet become White Rus-

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sian. He had a formula. The crass smoothness of it was not merely offensive, because it was futile: it indicated a refusal to understand.

I stood by his side when he received a delegation of the orthodox Jews of Lemberg. The city had been held alternately by Poland and Ukraina. Both had claimed the loyalty of the Jews, both had forfeited every vestige of human respect. Civilians, men, women and children had been killed, synagogues burned, houses looted. And Morgenthau stood listening to a long address in a quaint oriental language. The Hebrew scroll was not unworthy of a place beside the *Emek Habacha* and the *Shevet Jehudah*. The scene itself, soul-shaking as it was, reminded one of the continuity of our history. But Morgenthau was polite and condescending. The words were translated for him, but he stood wondering why these people insisted on addressing him in Hebrew, why they wore these outlandish clothes, why they would not Americanize themselves and their country.

The dishonesties of the Morgenthau report, bitterly attacked at the time, were in themselves of less importance than the state of mind which they revealed. Morgenthau really thought that his coming and his utterances could influence the issue,

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and he took up the attitude of the big executive who has come to iron out some differences. He soft-pedalled to the point of dishonesty the sins of the Polish Government—it was no good irritating the master people. And the Jews he told that they ought to be constructive in their outlook. “You people,” I note him saying once, “have the habit of looking at the *hole* in the doughnut. You ought to look at the doughnut itself.” My notes of that period read further: “This, after the massacres of Vilna, Lida, Lemberg, Minsk. He sounded like a peppy type-writer salesman in a Pullman smoker.”

The rage and disgust which made themselves manifest among Polish Jews even before the publication of the report were unjustly transferred to American Jewry as a whole. But not too unjustly. For, as the years passed, and the rich uncle had to dip more frequently into his pocket (though how deeply we have already seen), he intimated more openly that he was paying the piper and he was going to call the tune. He knew what was best for European Jewry. Even among the Zionists (though against effective protest) the same view was voiced; American Zionists gave more money than any other to the upbuilding of Palestine; they could not al-

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ways understand why they were not proportionately important in framing Zionist policies.

Zionists alone protested that this eternal money-raising was demoralizing American Jewry as a whole and the Zionist movement in particular. As we have seen, they raised money like everybody else; they worked as vigorously in relief and in Palestine reconstruction. Their warnings may have been of some effect, but on the whole the physical calamities of European Jewry precipitated a spiritual calamity in American Jewry. It had not learned how to give as though it were part of world Jewry. In the excitement of American pioneering, in the exultation of deserved and undeserved prosperity, it forgot that Jewish history extends to America too.

But the War and post-War years brought, together with this specific spiritual mischief (which a little adversity may undo), certain positive achievements. They are small in scope, but they indicate great possibilities. In part they actually represent the affirmative future of American Jewry.

The least important, though the most spectacular of these achievements, is the modernization and standardization of Jewish social service. The be-

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ginnings of this improvement go back to pre-War years, but in the last decade and a half the men and the methods employed in this field have caught up with the best to be found anywhere.

In this period American Jewry has changed from a receiving station into a comparatively static organism. Serious attempts have been made, therefore, to study the needs of the Jewish community. Relief gave way to constructive programs for "mal-adjusted" individuals and families. Vocational guidance, home training, instruction in child-care, Big Brother movements, summer camps, replaced in part the direct gift of food, clothes and money. Whatever may be said in general about the cant and pretentiousness of "case studies," there was a serious attempt to face a problem.

In the larger cities Federations of Philanthropy tried to unscramble the competition of separate institutions. The budget system was adopted, and a certain standard of efficiency was implied by membership in the Federation. Able men of the types of I. M. Rubinow, Jacob Billikopf, Maurice Hexter, Solomon Lowenstein and Morris Waldman were drawn into the work.

Yet, in the most important sense, all this was merely an attempt to improve the bare mechanics

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of social management. *The Jewish Social Service Quarterly* has little that is Jewish about it. The family case agency, wrote Rubinow, simply, "is a general human repair shop." Perhaps for this reason social service has been able to command intelligent attention on the part of businessmen too. The social worker did not have to speak to the Jewish donor about the political, spiritual or religious aspects of Jewish life. He was concerned with refitting an individual or a family. He spoke of unemployment, trades, hospitals, or of asylums and homes for the aged. The introduction of education into the Federation budgets (centers and schools) was difficult, and until lately it was not recognized that the chief business of a *Jewish Federation*, as distinguished from general relief agencies, should be the maintenance of those values which are the concern of the Jews only.

Federations still concentrate for the larger part on economic relief and reconstruction. Jewish education and Jewish centers, where they are included in Federation budgets, are regarded as luxuries; they are thought to belong to such sections of the community as have a special weakness for these things. In particular, the rich, assimilating Jew is inclined to look on the educational demands of

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certain, less Americanizing classes as excessive, or even slightly dangerous.

Jewish child education has made some progress in the last twenty years, rather in the sense of demonstration than of achievement. In New York, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Chicago, Minneapolis one meets today American-born and American-trained children who speak and read Hebrew, and have a feeling for Hebrew literature. They have a fair (though too romanticized) knowledge of Jewish history, and of the Jewish world situation. They prove that the pedagogic problem has been solved. But the scope of Jewish education is pitifully small. In New York one child out of six or seven gets any kind of training at all. In other large cities the record is no better, and of course the majority of these children receive only the beginnings of an education, useless unless followed up.

Like social service, Jewish education has attracted workers of ability, such as A. D. Friedland of Cleveland, Alexander Dushkin of Chicago, Israel Chipkin of New York, A. M. Berkson (now in Palestine), and Ben Rosen of Philadelphia. The man who trained these workers, Samson Benderly, perhaps deserves first mention. But the abilities of these men have been hampered by factors already

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alluded to, and one that still remains to be discussed, namely, the general vulgarization of the concept of culture.

The expansion of the Jewish Center is, in my opinion, the most important affirmative feature of the last twenty years of American Jewish life—again, however, as an indication rather than as an actuality. The name sometimes given to a center, Young Men's Hebrew Association, betrays not only the partly imitative origin of the institution, but a failure to understand the vital difference between Jewish and non-Jewish needs. The Young Men's Christian Association is a social agency. Its branches have a local or parochial character. Its purpose, at best, is to provide decent surroundings for young people, keep them busy with respectable pursuits, combat the demoralizing influences of uncontrollable city life, and direct their activities into channels which will please mother. The Jewish Center, to be Jewish at all, must have a much greater significance. Merely to keep Jews together in harmless or mildly commendable pursuits is no doubt a contribution to the social problem. But Jewish gymnasiums and Jewish basketball teams, Jewish dances and Jewish bridge-parties, even if they are inevitable because Jews cannot dissolve

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out in the mass, are, *by themselves*, imbecilities. It is absurd to expect Jewish organizations to remain free from the spirit of sport (as distinguished from athletics) and ballyhoo; these can, however, remain the common incidentals of a common American life. The separateness of organization can be made psychologically tolerable only by a separateness of spirit.

The Jewish Center should, in fact, be the carrier of a separate civilization. Judaism as a civilization is another term for Judaism as culture, and the wide influence of Professor Mordecai M. Kaplan is due to the fact that he has best formulated what is in the minds of thousands. Ideally the Jewish Center is a Society for the Advancement of Judaism, to use the term which Kaplan has given to his own institution. But the handicap in this last case is the excessive emphasis on God. Instead of being regarded as an important piece of creative folklore, God is still perpetuated in prayer and admonition as a literal, external reality. There is a call today in Jewish life for a form of social-cultural group of activity which shall deal with the God of the Hebrews as Unitarians have dealt with Jesus. This activity may in time grow out of the Jewish Center; but it cannot grow out of tap

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dancing and swimming pools. I do not expect the board of directors of a center to consist of research professors and ascetic goat's-milk drinkers; but its members should be conscious of a historic relationship between their institution and sixteen million Jews throughout the world, between their program and some thousands of years of Jewish continuity.

As the Jewish Center should be the key institution in a Jewish community, so its director should be a key figure, and not merely a replica of a Y.M.C.A. secretary, a mixture of entertainment manager, sports enthusiast and over-grown Alger-boy. He should be the intellectual leader, more the teacher than the administrator. But with the emphasis on amusement and social affairs, the right men will seldom go into this kind of work, and if they do go into it, their influence is frequently sterilized. The budget for cultural work is, in most centers, a fraction of the total, and when money is tight, the lectures and classes are the first things to be cut down. Very often the ostentation of donors to the founding of the center has made cripples of the inheritors. A heavy mortgage was considered the first step toward a center program: and the mechanics of the place absorb so much

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energy that next to nothing is left for the reality. I cannot help thinking of some superb buildings I have visited, in order to lecture before a tiny crowd huddled into the corner of a huge auditorium which is never more than half filled, contrasting this with dilapidated *Bate Midrashim* which have been mere shelters from the elements for groups of fanatical if old-fashioned intellectuals. One may without injustice draw another parallel: the skyscraper universities, or the universities with their incredible equipment and their vapid programs—and the old conception of the university, a meeting place for inspiring teachers and inspired students.

“Adult education” is accepted by most centers as a distinct problem; but the centers do not seem to understand what it is that they are called upon to replace in Jewish life. Seen secularly, the orthodox religion was really a compulsory education course for adults. The conservation of Hebrew was ensured by the prayers. It is quite true that the majority even of orthodox Jews did not understand the words they repeated by the hour. But if the Jews have succeeded in reviving Hebrew as a living tongue, while the Irish find the task impossible with Gaelic, it is because every day of his life the Jew was compelled to utter Hebrew words

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—half an hour in the morning on week-days, shorter prayers afternoon, evening and night, fragments throughout the day, and many hours of it on holidays. The language remained psychologically close to the Jews, and an admixture of it found its way into the vernacular. The orthodox ritual, too, necessarily carried with it implications of history, and certain intellectual refinements. As an educational system this is, of course, antiquated and wasteful; but its results were superior to those which are produced in a Reform temple and in the majority of the centers.

The classes for adults, where they exist, are inadequate because not enough money is spent on them; and the public lectures—which can have value only in connection with continuous cultural work—tend to remain sensational and fruitless. Oratorical stuff is in great demand—“inspirational” talks which do not presuppose any reading on the part of either lecturer or audience. The lectures on general subjects are rather better than those on Jewish subjects, not simply because the choice of lecturers is larger, but because Jewish subjects are not treated seriously. A compulsory overtone of praise and apologetics, of loyalty and stickiness, makes not only for monotony, but for

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emptiness. There is, again, the fear of the non-Jew. How many times have not I (and other lecturers) been told: "We have some gentiles in the audience. We don't presume to tell you what to say, but you understand. . . ." For a long time I did not understand, since it was inconceivable to me that anything I had to say could reasonably be interpreted as an effort to stir up mutual distrust. But finally I got the hang of the warning: I was expected to address the Jews, in these circumstances, as if they were merely a special and rather meaningless variety of non-Jew. By such devices it is made to appear that the study of Jewish matters is dull and narrowing, while the general field is more fascinating. The truth is that the Jewish field is as interesting as any, and more instructive and widening than most, by virtue of the simple fact that every Jewish problem touches on so many subjects simultaneously. The greatest single obstacle in the way of interesting and illuminating Jewish discussion is the fear of facing the truth in regard to the position of the Jew.

The Jewish Center is inadequately supported by the "leaders" of American Jewry. Its national organization is regarded as a professional affair. The considerable benefactions of men like War-

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burg and Rosenwald would be infinitely more effective if these had identified themselves with Jewish Center and educational work one half as publicly as with relief and charity work. Only one national institution is concerned with center work, namely, the Jewish Welfare Board—and that was rather a lucky left-over from the War than a deliberately planned instrument. *The Jewish Center*, the publication of this body, should have at least as wide a circulation as the *Bnai Brith Magazine*—but it cannot as long as it is not properly subsidized. It remains a meager and ill-printed professional bulletin, addressing itself to directors rather than to users of centers. While there is a school for Jewish Social Service, and several seminaries for rabbis, there is no national institution for the training of center directors. The Jewish Center should receive much more attention than relief work, and at least as much as the rabbinate; instead it bungles along, improving accidentally.

And if the improvement is there it is due rather to blind pressure, and to the need for morale, rather than to plan. If the status of the center director is still indeterminate, or non-descript, the caliber of person has improved considerably in

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the last ten years. There are many Jewish centers which provide the only intellectual activity of the locality; in small towns particularly non-Jews attend the center lectures because they have nothing like them of their own. But the center shines only by contrast with complete aridity. It still does not begin to replace the synagogue as an educational institution for Jews who cannot use the synagogue as their forefathers did.

The same evil of uncreative gregariousness lies heavily on the Jewish fraternal orders. These began eighty or ninety years ago as benefit societies, Americanizing agencies, nuclei of the homeless and uprooted. The sign of their origin is still stamped on them. With tens of thousands of members, with annual conventions, with considerable funds, they remain parochial. They have taken a mild interest in charitable work, in Talmud Torahs and synagogues. Only the Bnai Brith has shown spurts of a creative spirit, and has laid stress on adult education and national policy. Its most considerable achievement is the founding of University Centers for Jewish students—the first general assumption of responsibility toward the thousands of young men and women who imagine that with a college training their Jewish, as well

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as their personal, problems are nearer solution. Bnai Brith maintains, as we have noted, a publication somewhat above the level of the general English-Jewish press. It encourages lecture courses. Through its branches in other countries it does something to sustain the feeling of Jewish international solidarity. It is perhaps not fair to expect even this much from a fraternal organization. By their nature these institutions are fit only for mild benevolences. Historic interests awaken group hostilities, and lead to struggles and expulsions; and it is difficult to mix these with sick and burial funds, and cheerful brotherliness. The Order Sons of Zion, which ties up life insurance with national destiny, has always remained a fourth-rate organization.

Outside the synagogues, centers and orders, there are the slightly pathetic and slightly comical *landsmanschaften*, federations of Polish Jews, or Ukrainian Jews, or Roumanian Jews, interim associations which have no meaning in American Jewish life. They are the evidences of loneliness, and of nostalgia for "the old home," the witnesses of obstinate affections and sentimentalities. Round them are grouped the innumerable broods of Kiev Jews associations, Tartakover Jews, Lemberg Jews,

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Odessa Jews, Shnipishok and Eishishok and what not. They represent a life that is dying, memories of centuries in another world, recollections of the *cheder*, the *Beth ha-midrash*, the High Holidays, the village, the cemetery—things which have no meaning to the young generation. They also represent, unfortunately, the hosts of little statesmen, lawyers and real-estate agents who write letters to Polish and Roumanian ministers, get their names in the papers, negotiate with governments and get in the way generally. They help to make Jewish life silly, and provide the American ministers of anti-Semitic governments with the means to befuddle an issue. Jews with a finger in the international publicity pie are as numerous as Americans going to Europe to study conditions.

The gracelessness of American Jewish life is connected in the first place with the liquidation of the intellectual motif in Judaism, and this is illustrated by a special type of opposition to intensive Jewish child education—the “scientific” fear of overstrain. All Jewish studies are of course extracurricular, and when the youngster is supposed to be playing baseball, or amusing himself with the meccano, he is compelled to take an additional course, which needs at least an hour and a half to

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two hours a day. Modern parents, well up in the latest theories of pedagogics, know that this will lead to mental ruin. The ordinary human being cannot stand more than is given in the day-schools.

This horror of unusual mental effort is universal today. It has produced the dominant school of educators who have the most ingenious methods of teaching, and are afraid to teach anything. In the reaction against faulty pedagogy, routine drilling and the rest, the substance of education has melted away into a bleak minimum; for fear of overwork, the child is deprived even of the elements of discipline; and the illusion spreads that the good things of the mind are to be had by a vague, pleasant absorption.

I have not yet encountered a Jew who is ready to assert that the effects of the old *cheder* training have been reflected in the thickening of the Jewish mind. As far as I have been able to systematize my own observations, they point to the singular fact that Jews who have been through the *cheder* are brighter, more alert, and more successful than those who have not. And yet the resistance against "excessive" Jewish training is based ostensibly on regard for the mental health of the young.

The *cheder*, as it happens, was a wretched insti-

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tution. In the English provincial town where I made first-hand acquaintance with specimens of it, the worst features of the old continental traditions still flourished. As children we went to day-school from nine till half past four. Then, from half past six to eight, or eight-thirty, or nine-thirty, forty or fifty of us sat in a stuffy room and submitted to a wild, unsystematic drubbing in Hebrew, via the Bible. The curriculum consisted of the week's section of the Pentateuch, which we translated in a sing-song into Yiddish. The younger and more stupid dropped out in the course of the evening. At about half past eight the week's portion of the Pentateuch being finished, the brighter boys were initiated into the crabbed script of the great commentator, Reb Solomon ben Isaac, a brilliant exegetist who flourished nearly a thousand years ago. Him too we translated into a Yiddish chant. At half past nine a few athletes remained behind to delve into Mishnah and Talmud. Every hour or so we would take time out to say prayers and learn Yiddish writing. This happened five evenings in the week, with four extra hours during Sunday. On Saturday afternoons there was the story-telling session.

Astonishing as it must seem to the outsider, this

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“abuse” of the childish mind did not prevent the same Jewish boys from carrying off the prizes in the day-schools and, what is more significant, from becoming comparatively successful in after life. I have listed thirty-seven men who attended various *cheders* with me, and whom I have met later in life. Among them are businessmen, lawyers, doctors, and manual workers. Considering that we came from the poor (almost the poorest) section of the Jewish population, we have done well by the common standard. The assertion that the discipline of our childhood stupefied us would be quite senseless.

What is true, however, is that most of us have forgotten what we learned in the *cheder*, which proves that the method was wasteful, and not harmful. At the age of twenty-four I had to begin learning Hebrew almost as a strange language, though I had “learned” it in *cheder* for seven years. Most of the *cheder* companions I have met were in the same case. The fact that they did not regret their *cheder* experience as such would not prove that it had no harmful effects; but their positions in life indicate that either the *cheder* did them good or else that they are the happy victims of a very extraordinary conspiracy.

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The terror of modern Jewish parents that their children's minds will be ruined by extra study is the invasion of Jewish life by the low intellectual standards of the time. When not disguised as pedagogic theory, it presents itself as a false, sentimental plea for childhood happiness. I believe that children can be happy with a great deal more mental exercise than present-day educational systems force upon them; but even if the production of a better race of men and women did imply a certain hardening of childhood life, it would be better in the long run. In any case, the idea of a Jewish culture, or of any other kind, maintained without effort is part of the general mania for lunch counter education; and if Jewish tradition has anything affirmative in it, the first thing it implies is a contempt for easy Judaism.

The adult educational standards of Jewish life in America—and in most sections of modern world Jewry—are of a piece with this weak-witted and weak-willed brutalization of the young. What the world has gained in the spread of information—and that is an immense gain—it has lost in the levelling of standards. But we seem to be moving in a vicious circle. Raising the standards of child education implies an improvement in the cultural

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outlook of the parents. And it seems to be a waste of energy to train a handful of boys and girls in the aristocratic conception of Judaism and then turn them loose as misfits in a world of temples, fraternal organizations and *landsmanschaften*.

Yet there are signs that the vicious circle is beginning to crack, and I have reserved for the last chapter the examination of their character. But on the whole the picture as it stands is bleak. The young Jew who looks to Jewish public life as the place of exercise for a highly developed cultural appreciation of Judaism can scarcely perceive a foothold. Unless he becomes a semi-professional Jew (in which case the attitude toward him is: "Well, it's his business to know"), he must content himself with heading a dentists' or lawyers' or furriers' section in a money drive, or serving on an educational committee which occupies the least important place in the organization, or dishing out a flatulent ritual in a lodge. Only if he is rich enough can he hope to exert any influence—and even then he will find more satisfaction for his pride than for his spiritual tastes.

CHAPTER NINE

"Cantor, Let's Go!"

A SYNAGOGUE in a grimy street in a mixed business section of New York City—a sordid building, a cross between an old savings bank and a pre-Prohibition saloon. All day long it is shaken by traffic; all day long there is a hasty coming and going of sayers of the Prayer for the Dead—chauffeurs, businessmen, shoeblacks, policemen, lawyers, gangsters, drug-store clerks, bell-boys—on foot and in cars.

Strictly speaking, there is no prayer for the dead in the Jewish ritual. There is only the Sanctification, which glorifies God and calls down peace on the Jewish people. It recurs regularly in the general services, but it is also repeated specifically in *memory* of the dead. Scholars and sentimen-

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talists insist that it is not that superstition which is called a prayer *for* the dead. Jews are too intelligent.

But except on high holidays this synagogue is visited only by the *Kaddish* sayers. Once a day during the first year of mourning, once a year thereafter, they hurry from their stores, offices and hackstands, tumble into the synagogue, wait for a quorum to go through the prayers, then at the signal stand up and gabble something beginning *Yisgadal veyiskadash sheme rabo*. . . . For their convenience the text is printed in Latin letters at the back of the prayer-book, like an answer to an algebra problem. I have also seen the *Kaddish* printed on separate cards and handed round.

What do the words mean? The “worshippers” do not know. Why say them? The answers vary:

“Say, it don’t do me no harm, and maybe it does the old man some good.”

“A feller’s got to have some religion, ain’t he?”

“To tell the God’s honest truth, I don’t believe in them things, but what the hell?”

One mourner going in meets another coming out:

“Hey, feller, you’re late. We just got through.”

“For Christ’s sake, couldn’t you wait for me?”

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Whenever I pass the place I stop for a few minutes to watch the thin double stream. What does it remind me of? Ikons set up at cross-roads in Poland and Italy. The peasant gets off his cart, walks over, makes obeisance, crosses himself, mumbles something, then goes on his way whistling. Judaism reduced to a *memento mori*.

I am also reminded of a curious incident in Odessa between the Kerenski and the Bolshevik revolutions—a poster in various sections of the town reading as follows:

“We, the Jewish gangsters of Odessa, having heard that a pogrom is planned, hereby give notice that if any such thing is attempted we shall clean up the non-Jews.”

.
I am the guest speaker at an organization dinner. The plates have just been cleared off the table, the chairman rises. He is a friendly, peppy young fellow. He smiles round, and begins:

“Before we hear the distinguished speaker of the evening, we’re going to get into the right mood for his intellectual message by some snappy singing. I want you boys to show our visitor the real spirit. We’re going to start off with *The Side Walks of New York*. Now then, altogether.”

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The singing does not catch on. The chairman raps on the table. A pained look comes over his face. “No, no. Say, you, Jake Garber, that isn’t the way you holler at an auction, is it? Put some life into it.”

He jumps on a chair, holds up his hands like a conductor, and begins to bray. The audience looks slightly sheepish.

The rabbi leans over to me and whispers: “Fine young fellow. Best brotherhood worker we’ve got.”

The singing picks up a little, and the chairman’s face begins to glow. “Atta boy! Now then, the center table. Don’t you try to sneak off between the others. And you fellers up in that corner, I’m watching you.” The singing is still unsatisfactory. The young chairman shakes his head in despair, gets down from his perch, and leans over earnestly. “Boys, I know you’re waiting for the big treat of the evening. But you won’t get it till you show you deserve it.”

No one rises to brain the chairman, because, after all, he is a nice young fellow. He changes his tone:

“All right. *Side Walks of New York* ain’t so hot. Let’s try *Way Down Yonder in the Cornfield*. Now that’s real melody for you.”

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He leads off roguishly:

I saw Rabbi Zhimzhik

Looking for a chicken

Way down yonder in the cornfield.

Rabbi Zhimzhik smiles benevolently. I am wondering whether there is any way of getting past the armor which the audience is putting on

.

For the sixth or seventh time, in spite of earnest protestations, I must submit to the honor of being present at the secret initiation rites of the local lodge. The Grand Master is even authorized to show me, under oath, the grip of the order, a tricky three-finger affair with complicated movements at the joints; it reminds me of the Italian game of *Mora*.

Men who stand behind counters all day long, or work in offices, buy and sell sensibly, talk politics with some intelligence, come trooping in blindfolded, wearing dalmatics and other fragments of Klan regalia. They walk between lighted candles; they turn this way and that; they repeat formulas in hollow voices; they are led through involved patterns. They are asked in a disjointed catechism if they will always be proud of their ancestry, take upon themselves the sufferings of the Jewish peo-

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ple, carry high the banner of Israel, and perform other vague tasks. They answer that they will. They do not seem to be at all impressed.

In fact, they are not impressed, and there is no reason why they should be. They are not foolish. They know that all this is a borrowed form, has nothing to do with them, has no tradition behind it, conveys none of the substance of Jewish thought. Why do they do it? Nobody knows. Yet, when I stand firm on my refusal (on the seventh or eighth occasion) the Grand Master, the Guardian of the Spirit, the Keeper of the Gate, the Spirit of Peace, and the Sanhedrin are all offended

.
I sit in at Friday evening services, waiting for my lecture to begin. It is a Reform congregation consisting of Galician Jews. The president of the congregation reads part of the service in English, and from his accent one gathers that he would have been more comfortable reading it in Hebrew or Yiddish. I look at the congregants trying hard to be Reform. They are all *heimische Yidden*, my own kind, perfectly at home in a European Jewish atmosphere. An organ plays, and there is a meditative interval, like a moment of pathos in a movie, thin, high tremolo notes in octaves reminiscent of

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The Maiden's Prayer. The choir of Christian girls begins to sing at the back—I know they are Christian because they stick at the gutturals *Boruk ato*.

It is dull, unimpressive; the congregation looks sad.

I speak in English, but Yiddish would have been more in place. Some of them would have preferred clever exegesis of the old kind, with ingenious fitting of ancient texts into modern situations. They would have preferred a cantor of the old school, with his trills and roulades and falsettos. Why do they make themselves uncomfortable, and wear shoes which pinch? Why do they imitate an imitation? Because they have lost their sense of direction. They have been caught in the panic of Americanization. They do not know how to turn back gracefully. Like the lodge brothers waving their arms and talking grandiloquent Harlem, they know that this is not their way.

We finish up with an English hymn, Salvation Army poetry and melody, with the refrain: "Triumph, triumph all the way."

.
"Ladies and gentlemen of the radio audience, Cantor Rosenbaum, the gr-r-eatest Jewish songster of all time, will now sing for you that famous

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Jewish ballad: *Eili, Eili*. (Sotto voce) All right, Cantor, let’s go!”

.
Dozens of scenes and incidents like these are in my notebooks, the fruits of years of wandering. I have happier fragments, too; but the shoddy, the undignified, the repellent and the unamusingly funny predominate. The forces which are still able to make a head against this tide of vulgarity wait, uncertain of themselves and of the time.

CHAPTER TEN

The Dangerous Brotherhood

THE belief that the Jewish problem is going to be solved by talking mushy sweetness to the world, or that it can be stated in terms of abstract reactions, has about it the same soft-headedness and futility as may be encountered in the pacifist talk of afternoon teas in vestry-rooms. Brotherly love, light and reasonableness are more the product of conditions than their creators. The touching social-mindedness of big capital owes much more to the workers' movement than to the teachings of the churches. Wars will cease when it will become clear that they no longer pay; and that situation will be created not by appeals, but by the organization of those who have nothing to gain by wars. Appeals must therefore be replaced

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by elucidations. If the Jewish problem can be solved short of the disappearance of the Jewish people (which is no solution at all), there will have to be first a wider understanding of its elements and of its history.

Most of those who marvel at the survival of the Jewish people across so many centuries have failed to observe that for a long time Judaism was a powerful principle of organization from which individual Jews derived great worldly benefits. The disadvantages of being Jewish were compensated by generous group advantages. If we ignore the national and religious aspects of Judaism, or if we look upon these merely as accompanying propaganda, we perceive that the Jews of the Middle Ages constituted a special caste or brotherhood. To belong to this brotherhood was dangerous; but the internal system was so superior to that of the surrounding peoples that the danger was counter-balanced. Without this principle the Jewish people could not and would not have survived.

Judaism was at once a ritual, a code, a discipline, a way of life and a complicated preparation for it. It was a training, a morale and a complete system. Nothing was so trivial as to have eluded codification. Eating, drinking, obeying the calls of

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nature, washing, marrying, praying, dying, studying, travelling, going to sleep, rising, entering a house, putting on new clothes—everything was regulated. Even in death the Jew did not escape, for he looked forward to another world in which all the minutiae of piety would be repeated in a more luminous atmosphere of being.

A useful study might perhaps be made (or has been made already) of all “superstitions” with a view to discovering to what extent they veil a commonsense purpose, and to what extent they are aberrations. In the latter class we might place the couvade, sacrifice and prayer—making allowance only for the psychological effects. In the former class we would place the superstitions surrounding medicinal plants, inbreeding of families, lustrations, morality generally, leaving fields fallow, and so on. In the religious system of the Jews the element of usefulness was so clear that it inevitably turned the people into a superior order. A short analysis under two headings will make this superiority abundantly clear.

In the matter of hygiene the Jews stood far above the surrounding peoples. The Middle Ages were, as we know, prodigiously dirty. Hovels, castles, palaces and villages stank. The demand for

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gums and incense was founded in the preference for good smells over cleanliness. Human beings were dirty, and the stink of the more aristocratic bodies was frequently covered with perfumes. Food was heavily spiced to cover incipient decay, and later the high tastes were liked on their own account. It would not be unfair to compare the villages of the Middle Ages with the Arab villages of the present day. People slept naked between huge quilts which were never washed. The tremendous plagues of ancient and mediæval history—never quite quiescent, and rising at times, as in the sixth and fourteenth centuries, to apocalyptic climaxes—were the natural result of the dirt, the vermin and the malnutrition.

The Jews, because they were partially immune from these visitations, were widely suspected of controlling them. It is quite possible that the particular accusation that they were well-poisoners was connected with their singular use of its waters—i.e., for washing.

To a modern, the Jews of the Middle Ages would appear dirty enough; to their contemporaries they must have appeared finicky. The moment he rose from sleep, the Jew poured water over his hands, so that he might not utter the morning prayer un-

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washed. He never touched food with unwashed hands. On the eve of the Sabbath the Jew took a bath, with total immersion rigorously prescribed. A river was considered the equivalent of a *mikveh* for this purpose.

We have no means of knowing how often non-Jews washed in various parts of Europe, but it is certain that with the disappearance of the Roman civilization, and of the huge bath-houses of the large cities, the habit of washing died out, too. It was only with the re-establishment of city life in the eleventh century that public baths began to reappear. But the moral taint of the Roman baths clung to them. As a rule the public baths were practically houses of prostitution (the *bagnio* means both), from which it is evident that the practice of washing was associated in the public mind with a kind of immoral luxuriousness. In many places a separate day was set aside for Jewish bathers, but it is unlikely that the Jews made much use of the public baths. No Jewish settlement was so poor as to be without its own public baths.

The Jews were even more finicky about their food. Many of the regulations seem to have had no purpose: the pinching off of a piece of dough to be thrown into the fire, the separation of milk

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from meat, the prohibition of certain birds, fish and beasts. But other regulations have very obvious value. It was strictly prohibited to eat the meat of an animal which had died a natural death. The presence of a foreign body in the animal when opened, made it suspect. A huge literature, full of curious anatomical information, sprang up round the examination of liver, lungs and intestines of ruminants and fowl. Meat, before being cooked, was preserved for an hour in salt. And all these regulations were enforced not by mere custom, or by intelligent appreciation of hygiene, but by the implacable dictates of "superstition," infinitely more reliable.

Once a year the Jewish household went through a thorough Spring cleaning in preparation for the Passover. Then utensils had to be scoured with boiling water. If possible, new vessels and utensils had to be bought. All dirt suspected of harboring the prohibited leaven had to be removed from the house. The process was difficult, and nothing but religion could have ensured its carrying out. But at the end, the house was clean, and a clean house in the Middle Ages was a curiosity.

Recollections of mediæval practices lie stratified till this day in the practices of ignorant Jewish

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housewives. They are to the historian what the dinosaur's tooth is to the palæontologist. Many old orthodox Jewesses, though they wash their dishes with hot water every day, will cleanse them for Passover according to an ancient formula. They will pour water into the dish and place heated stones in the water until it boils. In the same way they cleanse a knife from ritual impurity by thrusting it into the ground instead of washing it. The practice undoubtedly survives from the time when it was simpler to heat stones than water, or when water was not so easily available as it is today. After the usual fashion of these things a substitute practice becomes sacred because it is old, and not because it is nearer to the spirit of the law. The use of sand or earth for water is actually prescribed, when the latter is not available; and the survival of the customs mentioned above indicates how deeply the masses had absorbed the instructions.

I have not either the Jewish or the medical knowledge to enter into a detailed analysis of all the regulations concerning sex relations. But that circumcision was valuable hygienically cannot be doubted, and the stringent prohibitions which separated wives from husbands before, during and

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after menstruation must have exercised a check on the spread of contagious blood diseases. The frequent fasts contained in the Jewish ritual must also have been beneficial. These were literally fasts and were not evaded by the substitution of fish for flesh. With all their famous casuistry the Jews never managed to turn *carne vale* (farewell to the flesh) into carnival.

In education the Jews were separated from the gentiles by a gulf even wider. While a great European territory was ruled by an Emperor who could not write a letter—the founder of the Holy Roman Empire!—an illiterate Jew was regarded by his co-religionists as a disgrace to his people. The Jews carried with them through the Middle Ages a popular regard for education which had evolved in a high center of civilization, and which no barbarian hosts could destroy. The Talmud was not a simple religious text-book. It was a training in law, business, mathematics. The mere existence of such a discipline was of incomparable value to the group, and the substance of the discipline was frequently useful in daily affairs. It is true that only a small proportion of the people acquired a Talmudic training, but the intensity of the higher education was made possible by the diffusion of a general

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regard for knowledge as an indispensable part of Judaism. During centuries in which the Western world regarded reading and writing as most people today regard the calculus, there were very few Jews so benighted as to have to follow a prayer-leader. That was reserved for the women. The poorest children were compelled to attend some kind of elementary school.

It is impossible to stress too heavily the extraordinary Jewish regard for learning. But what should be noted particularly is that out of necessity was born a magnificent virtue. All sorts of explanations may be found for the early Jewish passion for knowledge, as well as for the unique system of hygiene. The *usefulness* of either was, however, not recognized. In regard to learning especially, the Jews apparently did not understand that knowledge means worldly power. In fact, they denied it all utilitarian meaning. Out of this curious blindness arose the detached attitude toward knowledge, which thus took on a life of its own. The intellectual life was pursued *l'shmoh*, without thought of gain in this world. The sages said: make not of learning a spade to dig with, or a crown to shine in. They said further: he that fails to study one day loses two—meaning that the laggard goes

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back one day while knowledge goes forward one day, establishing a double interval. The world is sustained by the voices of children in school.... All these aphorisms sound weak to one who has lived in an old Jewish environment and has tasted, as it were, their living significance. Of all the Jewish superstitions, the love of learning, the adoration of knowledge, was the most frantic. Of the young scholar they said: happy the father that begot him, the mother that bore him. For the parents of young scholars separate thrones were prepared in the world to come. He that has goodness without learning is like a tree with powerful roots and no foliage; he that has knowledge without goodness is like a tree with spreading foliage and no roots; he that has both goodness and knowledge is like a tree with powerful roots and mighty foliage; he shall live and others shall live in his shade.

The culture-fad which occasionally sweeps over the modern middle classes was a permanent feature of Jewish life, with the following differences: It was not confined to a class, but permeated the entire people. Because it was permanent, it was more genuine in character, the popular phrase for a cultured man being not "one who is learned"

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but "one who knows well how to learn." Even the masses of the uncultured appreciated that culture is not something picked up *ad hoc*, like a mannerism, but consists of continuous absorption in intellectual values.

There are hundreds of thousands of Jews living today who, in a sense, were born in the Middle Ages. In Central Europe and the Balkans the huge landed estates, the absence of big industry, the backwardness of education and the domination of the Church produced a mediæval setting. The parallel must not be driven too far; there were centralized government, security, nationalism, trains and steamships, and an incipient world-feeling. But in important respects the village islands of life in Roumania, Bulgaria, Poland and Russia were, even thirty years ago, in close spiritual kinship with the Europe of the Crusades. To have been born in one of these places, to have carried the memory and savor of that life into the outside world, is to know the contrast between the old and the modern in a way which the average westerner can never acquire.

In my childhood the phrase "a gentile head" as the equivalent of thick-wittedness was so obviously just that there was no arguing about it. We, the

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little Jewish boys, went to *cheder* at an age when the little gentile boys were looking for eggs in the woods and making themselves whistles of reeds. Later we supplemented the school courses in the same way, while gentile children fought, worked in the fields and assimilated the immemorial dulness of their earth. There were other obvious cleavages. The Jews had a public bath, the gentiles did not. "He sat down at table without washing his hands—like a gentile" was a literal simile. "You will grow up a gentile," meaning an *ignoramus*, was not meant offensively; it only reflected a fact.

In our village there was no *Chevra Shass* (Talmud study circle), but there was the more popular Saturday afternoon Pentateuch lesson—Hebrew and Yiddish. Aaron the shoemaker, Leib the tin-smith and the others gathered to hear Bible exegesis, and incidentally to practice two languages. Roumanian Jewry, however, is regarded as especially ignorant, and Roumanian Jews figure in the popular mind (and not unjustly) as the *bon vivants* and the peasantry of Jewry. It is in Lithuanian villages that I have seen that extraordinary institution, the *Chevra Shass*—something probably without parallel among other peoples. It still survives in big Jewish centers in America where the

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fragments of the old life have not been wholly washed out. To purely modern Jewry it is altogether unknown.

Its special characteristic was its divorce from what we nowadays consider as the inevitable accompaniments of the cultural urge: leisure, the drawing-room, showiness, upper class snobbery. Peddlers, shoe-makers, tailors, all sorts of economic rag-tag and bob-tail belonged as naturally to such a circle as well-to-do merchants. And he who has sat in on one of these bi-weekly or tri-weekly sessions will understand what "the intellectual life" can mean as a transforming element. Dull pursuits and ignominious worries are forgotten. Here mind is king. Sitting two and three to a huge folio, these queer students argue late into the night the close-knit text and its commentaries, the law and the history of the law (which are worked together), the comments and the variations of the sages. When a particularly nice point is revealed, faces light up with an almost sensual joy, and you will hear the delighted formula: "*Ei gut! Noch a mohl*"—let's have that again—as if they had swallowed a delicious morsel. The range of subject matter is as wide as the ancient world, and the theoretical questions seem to have ex-

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hausted every possibility—and many an impossibility—of human combinations. They may argue the liabilities of a man who had fallen off a roof into a woman in such wise as to impregnate her, or the immorality of passing a store and examining the goods without intention of buying, thereby raising false hopes in the merchant. The argument may deal with the permissibility of doing certain work on the Sabbath when danger to life is involved, the impermissibility when duress is being used. It may deal with the laws of circumstantial evidence, of inheritance, of damages. Whatever the substance of study, grotesque or matter of fact, remote or immediate, the argument awakens the mind, wits are alert, questions are asked, new solutions suggested, authorities consulted. Through it all runs a marvelous strain of poetry, incidents, legends, erotica, aphorisms, witty anecdotes, and massive commonsense. Within that circle, for the time, the intellectual spirit is master.

These study circles are older than the Jewish exile. They were to be found throughout the centuries dotted across a Europe which consisted largely of "beasts of burden and beasts of prey." Their only parallel was the cloister where monks still copied the ancient masters. But from among

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the gentile peoples the memory of the old civilization had died out, while the Jewish people carried it with them. When Rome had declined into an overgrown village, its inhabitants looked upon the ruins of the Forum as the work of a fabulous race of giants; among the Jews the historic memory was in substance the continuity of the culture.

I cannot stress too frequently the sense of *national* participation in the cultural outlook even on the part of the ignorant. If they could not study, they regarded it as an honor to serve a student. They aspired toward learning as people aspire toward social distinction. Their awe was reserved for scholars, not for warriors. Judas Maccabæus and Bar Kochba were much less familiar incentives to the imagination than Rabbi Akiba and Hillel. We know that this was due to the position of the Jews in the Middle Ages—but the fact remains what it is. Jewish mothers dreamed of seeing their children learned rather than wealthy. I do not know of any English, French or German folk and children songs which parallel the Jewish “songs of learning,” and any attempt to translate the latter merely makes them grotesque. They belong to an untranslatable setting. What people could, for instance, sing in a roistering mood the charm of the

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Talmud as opposed to the charms of drink? This, however, is the theme of

Geht a goy in shenkele arein. . .

For their learning, as for their cleanliness, the Jews paid an extra price in the suspicions and the hatred of the surrounding world, and it was worth while. But the learning, it must be remembered, served a larger purpose than mere instruction and preparation. It had gone far beyond its utilitarian aim (this being in any case unconscious) and had become a tremendous moral force. Jews could fight among themselves more than other peoples; or at least could fight among themselves in situations which would have been fatal to other peoples, because the centripetal power of their tradition of training was stronger than the centrifugal power of divergent interests and intellectual hostilities. "Unity" in the repressive sense was not felt, and the uniformity of organization was accepted as city people accept the fact that they must live in streets. Internal disagreements and hatreds could not avail against the major significance of accepting the Jewish way of living. They could not accommodate themselves to the inferior equipment and traditions of the surrounding world. A Jew in high places might meet his equal in outlook among a few rulers

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and churchmen; but the average Jew simply could not think of living among gentiles. He revolted from the brutishness, the ideallessness and mental hopelessness of their life.

The reconstruction of civilization with the ending of the Middle Ages gradually robbed the Jewish training of its obvious advantages. The hygiene of the Jew became outmoded; science has done so much better than the Talmud. The Jewish educational system, with its indirect practical values, has been outmoded in the narrower practical sense by the spread of popular education. Again the contrast was brought home to me in personal experience. In the Roumanian village of my childhood the Jew felt himself to belong, quite justly, to a higher order. In the great modern city to which we migrated the feeling of superiority vanished. The shock was extraordinary. We were, at first, as grasshoppers in our own eyes. Here were schools for everyone, running water in all houses, public baths, newspapers which everyone read, public libraries, universities, lectures, theatres and, above all, a dazzling vastness of gentile life. Where was our mediæval system now?

We kept up the old distinction. We still studied more than gentiles, we still used the old phrases.

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But we were no longer certain. It seemed to us that we were going through futile gestures. We had yet to learn that the old Jewish outlook could take on a new significance, and serve a larger purpose than ever, and that what was apparently a sentimental luxury in the modern world would turn out to be a life-and-death necessity.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Belly and Soul

THERE was one additional advantage which the Jews possessed, and for this they were not responsible: their dispersion. The Middle Ages were a frozen time. Between the *Völkerwanderung* and the Crusades life was wholly local, and as the idea of a world state (the Roman Empire) receded into pure theory, the outlook of men became restricted to a province. Nationalism and its concomitant of internationalism were unborn. The Church alone was cosmopolitan and, as it alone was responsible for the maintenance of learning and of the *lingua franca*, it alone had a larger outlook; but its equipment was dedicated primarily to the preservation of its own monopolistic position.

Such trade as there was in the feudal economy,

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in spices, perfumes, silks, textiles and slaves, was haphazard until the twelfth or thirteenth centuries. Only then did the associations of traders spring up. In England the beginnings were not made till later. Towns began to reappear in Europe toward the beginning of the eleventh century, and between them travelled groups of peddlers—the merchant caravans, as they are called—selling for cash on the spot. Credit and banking were unknown. Scattered across this agglomeration of villages and provinces, were the Jews, a mobile; educated element, with an active international language of its own and connections in various parts of that world.

Until the growth of the cities and the rise of a trading element among the non-Jews, the economic position of the Jews was not unfavorable. Besides having the equipment for trade, they were fortunate in another respect: the ideology of the ruling classes was opposed to the trading principle. The rulers were warriors, robbers and managers of agricultural estates; the workers were serfs or half serfs bound to the soil. Governments as such had no reason at first for joining in the persecution of Jews. On the contrary, Jews frequently became valuable royal property. They lived often under the direct jurisdiction of the King. From time to

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time they were robbed; in between, the ruling classes gave them a chance to make a living. Until well after the close of the Middle Ages, enlightened rulers, whether in Poland, France, England, Italy or the Levant, would open their country to the Jews.

With what intensity the Jews concentrated on trade can be understood from the after-effects; statistics for the Middle Ages do not exist. But if in our own time the Jews played so disproportionate a rôle in trade, what must that rôle have been like when trade (small in volume, of course, but enough to absorb the large part of a very small people) was considered a disreputable pursuit, and competition was restricted to scattered and disorganized local groups?

In his massive work *Die Soziologie der Juden*, Dr. Arthur Ruppin furnishes tables of the distribution of Jews through the economic structures of the modern countries. In 1920 the Jews of Hungary formed 5.9 per cent of the population; but they provided only 0.4 per cent of the farmer class and 50.8 per cent of the classes engaged in commerce, insurance and transportation. That is to say, they contributed more than nine times their "share" to trade. In Galicia they gave one-eighth

of their proportion to the land, and six times their proportion to commerce. In Germany, a more advanced country, they formed in 1907 one per cent of the population and 4.2 per cent of the business class.

The conversion of mediæval dislike of the Jew into modern capitalist anti-Semitism began seven or eight hundred years ago, running a confused course in three over-lapping stages. Europe did not develop homogeneously; sections remained divided by centuries, and in the accidents of history (which means the sudden intrusion of forces external to an area) it is often difficult to distinguish a given stage. But the threefold division seems clear enough.

The first began with the expansion toward trade known as the Crusades. Within a hundred years after the first Crusade the travelling caravans began to be replaced by the business colony and the warehouse—the establishment of factors in foreign countries. The unique international (strictly, inter-provincial) position of the Jews began, very slowly, to lose its significance. It was to take many centuries before that significance could be destroyed altogether. Today, with trade an internationalized institution, with world communication

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so advanced that a journey from England to America is a mere jaunt, with cables, wireless and aëroplanes, with a wide study of foreign languages, the Jew derives no trade advantage at all from his dispersion.

The beginnings of trade meant also the beginnings of the groping toward national markets and therefore toward nationalism. The unrest took on a religious form, and the first systematic large-scale pogroms were instituted by the Crusades. Indirectly, therefore, we may say that these persecutions were a form of competition.

The second stage in the transformation coincides with the struggle between the rising merchant class and the landed aristocracy, and the replacement of feudalism by mercantilism. In this major operation the competition of the Jews was partly forgotten; the task before the new monied class was the conquest of political power. In England the issue came to a head in the middle of the seventeenth century, in France toward the end of the eighteenth; the spectacular Civil War in the one case, and the revolution in the other, symbolized the clash of the merchant with the landed aristocrat in classic fashion. Though the same change took

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place everywhere, nowhere else did the issue find such clear definition.

A special illusion was created among the Jews as the result of this struggle: the belief that the basic attitude toward the Jew had changed. The slogans of the struggle between land and counting-house were specious and misleading. In England it looked like a fight for liberty in general. Hampden, Pym and Cromwell were not seen, and still are not seen, as the representatives of a class, and the overthrow of the Stuarts is still regarded as an all-inclusive advance toward liberty. The French Revolution was still more extreme in its propaganda. Liberty, Equality, Fraternity (with no implied distinction of class or creed) was preached to the whole world, when in reality nothing was meant by the movement beyond the liberty of capital from oppression, the equality of the merchant class in the hierarchy of rule, and the fraternity of businessmen. The mental impetus of the struggle carried the propaganda too far, and the ideals awakened threatened for a brief moment the realities desired: the Levellers in England, the *enragés* in Paris, are representatives of the logical application of the word. The political emancipation of the Jew began with the overthrow of the aris-

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tocracy. It was a by-product, accidental and essentially unreal. The Jews passed from the inadequate shelter of the autocratic law into the open spaces of the democratic law. But what they believed to have been emancipation proved merely a change of method. In the nineteenth century the third stage in the transformation of anti-Semitism was reached.

Society was now commercial and industrial, and the governing classes were the competitors of the Jews. In the struggle against the aristocratic privileges, the new class had taken up an attitude on legal rights which made it difficult now to discriminate formally against the Jews. The political and civic emancipation went on, but that meant that competition would have to express itself in other forms; and the indirectness of these forms added an element of misunderstanding and irritation to what should at least have been a frank rivalry. Social and business discrimination, professional repression, the use of such legal distinctions as still existed (exclusion of Jews from universities, higher ranks in the army, etc.) became more and more obvious as the theory of equality became more and more developed. By the latter half of

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the nineteenth century Jews began to understand that the great emancipation had been a detour.

The Jews had obtained a tremendous headstart in trade. They had tradition as well as training. They also had the curious advantage of being permitted to do little else. But early in the struggle it became clear that Jews would maintain a partial lead only in respect of the numbers engaged in trade and finance, and not in the volume which leading Jewish merchants and financiers controlled. The more modern a country became, the smaller was the proportion of Jews in business. In Hungary and Galicia a much larger slice of Jewry was engaged in commerce than in Germany or England. But, what is more important for the entire picture, the proportion of *big* Jewish traders and financiers dropped much more rapidly than the proportion of small ones. The tenacity of the Jew was confined to the field (it was stay in or die) and did not extend to the foremost places in that field.

The illusion is common to Jews and gentiles that the former have a natural or psycho-physical flair for business, or, at any rate, that Jews have shown as much leadership in it throughout the ages as they have in intellectual achievement. In spite of Werner Sombart's thesis, it is difficult to obtain, as

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a result of general economic reading, the impression that the Jews were the leading capitalistic force in Europe. By the fourteenth century the Italians were already far in advance of the Jews. The house of Peruzzi, with its sixteen branches throughout Europe, the Bardi, the Pitti, the Chigi (as famous in their time for their magnificence as their wealth) were without equals among their Jewish rivals. The Medici were financiers as well as rulers. Jewish successes fired the imagination, attracting as they did, disproportionate attention. The Jewish *luftmensch*—the helpless, scheming, unstable picker-up of commissions and odd bargains—is much more characteristic of the people than is the Jewish merchant family. In banking today all the international terminology has come to us via the Italian (*banca rotta*, *conto*, *disconto*, amount from *monte*, etc.); while the Jewish contribution to Europe is represented in words like amen, halleluiah and cherubim.

The spread of education, as I have indicated, dislodged the Jew from his economic position; but there has become evident in the growth of industrialism a principle which is fatal to the distributing class as such. The small trader is really a primitive phenomenon. He can no more stand up to the

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problem of modern distribution than the homeworker can stand up to the problem of large-scale production. The drive against the shopkeeper and the peddler really began with the industrial revolution.

The three largest groups of Jews, in Russia, Poland and America, are being squeezed out from business for the same basic reasons, though with different implements. In Russia the state is the supreme trader, and occasional tactical concessions to the small traders only prolong the agony of that class. In Poland the large, centralizing cooperatives are restricting the field of the trader, while the development of a non-Jewish merchant class makes the competition in the restricted field fiercer. Hence one hears, from the Jewish leaders, the statement that there are one million too many Jews in Poland—an altogether extraordinary statement. They do not say that there is a surplus population as a whole in that country; they mean specifically that the Jews, having been poured into a certain mould, and being prevented from overflowing into another, now find the pressure unbearable. In America (as in England, France and elsewhere) the pressure against the trading class takes two forms: the growth of chain stores, department stores and

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mail-order houses, and (much more important, though seldom spoken about), the direct contact between manufacturer and public.

In the case of Russian state trade, Polish cooperatives and American chain stores the effect is so obvious as to need no explanation. It should only be noted that even if a few Jews do enter this field, their number must necessarily be so small, that the effect on the mass remains unchanged. But the direct approach of the big industrialist to the public transforms the trader into an agent—and here the disaster to the businessman, though less obvious, is more complete.

The manufacturers of standardized products, whether they be motor-cars or cosmetics, do their own selling to the public via advertising. They make their own campaigns, they fix the prices, they choose their localities—and they give the distributor a fixed commission. The trader does not, in this case, really buy and sell; he is not a speculator, he does not adventure. Whatever his cover, he is actually a hired distributor. A definite fraction of every free drug store, grocery, cigar and candy store is therefore part of a chain system. There are many lines which free dealers are compelled to carry though they yield only a small margin of

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profit because a wide demand has been created for them through advertizing. Handkerchieves, hair tonics, patent medicines, patent foods, toothpastes are among such articles.

Thus, where the manufacturer cannot, by the nature of his produce, establish his own depots (as in the case of automobiles, shoes, clothes, hats) he is in effect clubbing together with other manufacturers of small-ware and forcing the shopkeeper into the rôle of agent. Between the chain stores, the department stores (which are vertical chain stores), the mail-order houses and the big manufacturers, the merchant proper is being pressed to the wall.

Whatever is left to the merchant class therefore becomes the prize of a fiercer struggle. As far as the Jew is concerned, this is not the end of the evil. The pressure is in turn transmitted to workers and employees. Jews attempting to leave business and enter a trade find the field already saturated, and their group efforts rouse a new resentment. And thus the sporadic pogroms of the past, the inefficient persecution alternating with tolerance yields to a relentless and automatic pressure. The steady concentration of wealth continues as the nemesis of the system; the natural by-product is a triple as-

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sault on the Jewish mass. It is pressed downward from above, and upward from below; and it is subject at the same time to increased internal pressure.

Even geographic motion from high to low pressure areas has become impossible. The economic structure of the world is becoming rapidly standardized. Jews pressed out of Spain together with other elements which threatened the old economy could find accommodation in the Netherlands and in the Levant. Jews pressed out of Russia could until recently find accommodation in America, Canada, South Africa. But the million Jews of Poland have today no hope at all. The pressure is uniform throughout the world.

Modern anti-Semitism therefore differs from mediæval Jew-hatred in several important respects. These must be viewed under two headings: the expression, and the mechanical reality behind the expression.

In the early Middle Ages the Jews were in part an offensive curiosity and in part a religious stage property. They were disliked in a general way because they were different and apart; they were disliked specifically because they were "the Christ-killers," the "accursed people" and "the deniers of salvation." In the system of thought of that time,

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these accusations were serious and honest. But actual occasion for assault upon the Jews had to come from something less diffuse. There had to be a real clash of interests, precipitating new and more immediate accusations, like the use of Christian blood for the ritual, the poisoning of wells, desecration of the mass, the bringing of plagues. And the real clash of interest came, as we have seen, with the rise of a non-Jewish trading class.

Here, however, the enmity was partial and irregular. There was not a powerful, universally recognized and universally respected gentile section of the population involved. Mob hates had to be whipped up, and the lash was religious fable and the hobgoblin fears of that time.

Neither in mediæval times nor in modern was the immediate impelling cause of an attack understood, much less admitted. But at least in the Middle Ages the accusations were in the character of the epoch. They were "genuine." The peculiarity of modern anti-Semitism is, that it is out of character with the time. Its expressions are unreal for our age. They involve an intellectual dishonesty within the framework of our way of thinking.

Religious intolerance of the Jew cannot exist in a world which no longer fights for its religions.

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The most interesting symptom of the changed position is the rise of the tendency to "hate" the Jew, not for having killed Christ, but for having produced him! Nietzsche was, of course, no vulgar anti-Semite; but in the keeping of Ludendorff neopaganism becomes a mob resentment against the producers of Christianity—a fine how-do-you-do for the Jews who played their moral trump-card by quoting their blood-relationship to the Son of Man. Apart from this freak extreme, instructive in the same way as pathological extremes are instructive for normal mental processes, the frantic search for good reasons for hating the Jew has produced novel consequences.

It is so important to make this part of the investigation clear that I am willing to run the risk of being too elementary. If you want my watch, or my job, you will find it much easier to set about getting it ("honestly" or by violence) if the action is accompanied by a process of self-propaganda: that is, if you can first prove to yourself that I killed your God, or violated your culture, or that I eat soup noisily and fail to salute your flag. It will then do me no good to prove that the Romans killed your God, or that your God is nine-tenths myth, that I contribute to your culture, that I eat soup

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quietly and am extremely patriotic. Will you not always find a covering reason for going after my watch? The better my arguments, the angrier you will get; in the last resort you will relieve me of my watch for being too clever in defending my possession of it.

Men want to live—that is their first demand. After that, they want to be intellectually honest, as a luxury. But nature has done better by our stomachs than by our brains; it is only in rare cases that the brain is not an extension of the stomach. And for some reason or other no man wants to admit that he is merely after bread, or after the watch. His acquisitive apparatus works better behind colorful pretences. And the first, the most important step toward the softening of the enmity is to recognize the source of most of it.

Of course the pattern of forces is not so simple. There *are* differences of outlook and of temperament between the Jewish and the non-Jewish groups. But these are not as such related to bread-and-butter realities. In the matter of stomach all human beings, all groups, are alike. Hence the absurdity of Aldous Huxley's sneer about Jewish stockbrokers. It is irrelevant to the modern mind. When, in a Socialist text-book (a Plebs publication,

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The English National Council of Labor Colleges) the same sort of distinction is made, the permeative effect of capitalist anti-Semitism is even more strikingly illustrated. Concerning Dernberg, of the Dresdener Bank, the first German Colonial Secretary and a typical imperialist, the text-book quotes: "A man of business pure and simple, in whose Jewish veins flows the spirit of finance rather than of affairs." But concerning the Communist manifesto, the same book says: "It was written by two young men, Karl Marx and Engels," *tout court*. Only the Rothschilds and Dernberg are left of the Jewish heritage, while Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxembourg are internationalized.

To accuse the writers of the Plebs text-books of anti-Semitism would be ridiculous. But of the novel effects I have mentioned none is more curious than the unconscious submission of liberated minds to the automatic dishonesty of the mass outlook. Big capital is impersonal and unracial. It behaves the same way in all hands. If the emancipated, who know this, forget it in speaking about Jews, how much worse must it be (as it is!) among the unemancipated. There the inability to detach the brain from the stomach results in a violent, untroubled pursuit of all sorts of phantom accusations:

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manners, loyalty, honesty, courage, ability—every faculty is involved in the continuous coining of slogans. It is impossible to keep pace with the dreadful ingenuity of the rationalizing apparatus.

But now we reach the center of the labyrinth of misunderstanding.

Mediæval Jew-hatred was consistent and intelligible in its fantastic arguments; modern anti-Semitism is inconsistent and unintelligible. The former argued logically on false premises; the latter argues falsely on false premises. The former was anxious to absorb the Jews; the latter has no Christianity into which to absorb them. *And their absorption into the economic system (except in Russia) is precisely what is discouraged.*

For what point is there in absorbing the Jews and adding to the number of undifferentiated competitors? As they stand now, the Jews are recognizable as a group which can be pushed out in the struggle and relegated to a lower position. Their racial or religious or psychological differential acts as a cement for both sides. Standing out from the rest of the world, the Jews form an excellent target to be shot at. They help to organize the struggle for bread.

Suppose that, tomorrow, all Jewish merchants

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were to become unrecognizable as such. What advantage would that bring to the merchant class as a whole? None at all. On the contrary, the ranks of the non-Jewish merchant class would be greatly increased, and an important, "helpful" feature of the economic struggle, a certain channeling of competitive opposition, would be removed. Roughly, it would be as though the Democrats were to wake up one morning as Republicans, and were to flock to Republican headquarters for their share of political spoils. The Republican party certainly wants to be in a majority, and to win; but it does not want all America to be Republican because that decreases the proportion of booty falling to the party; also it disorganizes the whole struggle-system.

In a New York of six million non-Jews, no advertisements could appear: "Christians only," and therefore hundreds of thousands of Christians would lose an advantage. The higher advertizing game, which excludes Jews today, would cease to be exclusive. No tacit combines could be made in professions, industries and institutions, to the advantage of the larger group.

New York is an extreme example because it harbors such a high proportion of Jews; but the

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Jews are city people. Five sixths of American Jewry lives in groups of over ten thousand in the larger cities of America. Their partial exclusion always means a considerable economic advantage.

The offensive and defensive economic alliance is part of the struggle for bread. To that extent it cannot be called anti-Semitism at all; but in combination with the rationalization of hostility it becomes anti-Semitism, that is, an active enmity toward the people not only in its physical but in its spiritual aspect.

The nature of the basic enmity prevents non-Jews from considering the merits and defects of the Jewish group character on the spiritual plane. The Jews have to be kept apart. There is a continuous resistance in the non-Jewish majority against the mass assimilation of Jews. It is true that everywhere a larger group resists the assimilation of a smaller competitive group, for the reasons which have been given here in connection with the Jews. In the case of the Jews, however, the resistance is much higher. It is fortified by a number of factors. There is, in the first place, the high reputation (exaggerated in modern circumstances) which the Jew carries for business ability. To let this competitor find cover and shelter is much more

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dangerous (such is the thought) than absorbing Italians or Russians or Germans. The second factor, perhaps more important, is the pre-existence of the wide folkloristic attitude toward the Jew. Even in countries where Jews are an infinitesimal minority (as in Italy) there can be sudden twinges of a theoretical anti-Semitism of a mediæval kind. There is still, among the masses, a bogey-man suggestiveness in the word Jew; that is why simple people like Henry Ford and Colonel Mayfair can believe at times in a monstrous international Jewish organization—they call it Jewish capitalism, but any other name would do—the omnipotence and omnipresence of which relates it to the invisible spirits of the Middle Ages.

Further, the Jews are an easily distinguishable group, being in this respect inferior only to Negroes and Chinese. Names, faces and religious affiliations set them apart. Though they are, like all other peoples, highly mixed, the basic Semitic strain and its additions, Armenian, (Hittite), Bedouin, Babylonian, etc., give them a general, peculiar character. Many Jews look Russian, Germanic or Italian but the mass effect is, particularly in a Western country, unmistakably individual. Even the efforts of Jews to disguise the more

changeable features betray them. The Jews flock in such numbers to certain specifically non-Jewish names (like Milton, Murray, Chester, etc.) that the non-Jews are always moving on to new streets. Family names change more slowly because they are inherited and there is a feeling of disgust attached to the too obvious repudiation; but if any attempt should be made here en masse the same effects would ensue. Already many gentile institutions have turned to the etymology of names. In certain universities students have been asked whether they, *or their fathers*, have ever changed their names.

All these elements in union make resistance against Jewish assimilation decisive. Individuals may slip past in considerable numbers, but never in such numbers as to affect the problem as a whole. In Germany, where baptism and assimilation have absorbed more than a hundred thousand Jews in the last century, the numbers of the Jews are, apart from the post-War immigrants, larger than ever. In Germany, too, the resistance against Jewish assimilation has become fiercer than anywhere else, precisely because of the mass movement in that direction. No matter how the Jews wriggled and twisted, no matter what externals they dropped, they always found an obstacle be-

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fore them. It was in Germany that the racial as opposed to the religious opposition to the Jews was first formulated; and it is in Germany that the specific warning against admitting Jewish blood into the dominant strain has been made a slogan. From Germany comes also the charming and instructive story of the successful Jew who is about to baptize and asks Herr Baron Teutschtum what it is customary to wear at one's baptism, to receive the answer: "Diapers."

It is because practical anti-Semitism is an essential part of the competitive struggle that it has been declared counter-revolutionary in Russia. But we cannot yet tell whether this prohibition, a necessity of Bolshevik ideology, will not prove impotent in the end. A republic of workers, taken as a unit, is not a more ethical organism than a capitalistic republic, and there is nothing which stands in the way of a war between two republics of workers. Socialism is based on the self-interest of the working class, and its ethical qualities are ignored by socialist theorists as sentimentalities. When a recognizable Jewish group in Russia will clash with a non-Jewish group, either in the search for jobs or territory, the old hatred will recur. In the present transitional period, with its enthusiasms, its

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hard work, and its magnificent absorption in construction, the problem is in abeyance. If in the end the best happens, almost beyond practical hope, and there emerges a country in which the struggle for existence has been replaced by perfect cooperation, in which no one need go hungry in order that another might be fed, we shall for the first time discover whether the Jewish group can retain its identity on the basis of purely affirmative values. But by that time the Jews may have founded separate republics; or the historic stage beyond Communism may have been reached; or the Jews may have concentrated in certain occupations which will again fortify their group existence.

It is the road toward the ideal state in Russia which bears hardest on the Jews as a group. The legal suppression of Zionism and the general semi-legal hostility to religion scarcely give the Jews a chance to transfer to the new life the affirmative qualities contained in the old culture. The bad and the good, the harmful and the valuable, perish together, the assumption being that one cannot survive without the other. The Jews are a peculiar people because they have been compelled to invest everything in their religion. To suppress their religion at once, without a sifting which takes time, is

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to strike at all their stock. If the process goes on it is hardly likely that this enormous work of centuries, the Jewish cultural heritage, will transmit anything to the future Jews of Russia, and thus the oldest *living* memory of a people will have vanished from the human scene.

In the far future, then, one of three things may happen. The Jews may disappear completely—which is very unlikely; they may retain an identity without individuality; or they may carry on, side by side with their other work, a cultural productivity of their own. It is the second alternative which is the most to be feared, not only because it is repulsive, but because it is the universal danger of Jewry, outside of Russia as well as in it.

Meanwhile, if the analysis in this chapter is correct, if the resistance to Jewish assimilation is even half as strong as I have pictured it, it seems to be quite nonsensical to say to Jews: "Forget it! Don't walk around with a chip on the shoulder. Pay no attention to anti-Semitism. As soon as anti-Semites perceive that they can't get a rise out of you, they'll drop their Jew-baiting, and most of your troubles will be over." Though we should follow these excellent instructions and, rising to a supreme, inhuman dignity and serenity, ignore

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without resentment whatever evil is said about us, we should be as far as ever from peace. The advice is good; if we can live up to it we shall have achieved a great inward serenity. But that is not what our friends mean.

CHAPTER TWELVE

The Mnemonic of Oblivion

THIS tactical resistance to the assimilation of the Jews is seldom acknowledged. That a resistance exists is admitted, but it is explained naturally as part of that very prejudice which Jews have to overcome. Very few people perceive that the resistance, though expressed in terms of prejudice, is in reality an intelligible economic manœuvre—intelligible, that is, from the point of view of the acquisitive instinct. The instinct, however, covers itself with prejudices as the body covers itself with clothes—partly to keep warm, partly because we are ashamed of nakedness, and partly for adornment. The effort to counter the instinct by changing the cut of clothes is waste of energy.

The advice given to Jews to dissolve out, to

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assimilate, comes with the greatest sincerity from those limited, emancipated circles which get along just as well with the unassimilating as with the assimilating Jew. It is not for *their* sake; it is for the sake of the people *they* despise. If we drop the argument of the economic manoeuvre, and speak of the resistance as a pointless prejudice, a hang-over, we perceive that Jews are not asked to *overcome* prejudice (which means destroying it by education), but to truckle to it by evasion. Let us see how the situation now stands.

There are kindly and enlightened gentiles who deplore our standoffishness and separatism. I am thinking, in particular, of George Bernard Shaw in England, who recently rebuked our racial pride and told us to assimilate, and of Heywood Broun in America, who rebuked the Christians, but also advised the Jews (by implication at least) that they had better assimilate. To these generous spirits and their fellows one must address the following questions: How do you picture to yourselves the general process of assimilation? What is the technique, and what are the results on the mind and spirit of the Jews who set out on the long road?

The most important single step—the indispensable step—toward assimilation, is inter-marriage.

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Nothing is as powerful a cement for a human group as the memory of a common descent. Economic interest can be stronger in fits, but while it operates continuously it does not operate uniformly on the same group of persons. Economic interests of individuals and families and groups change their character; the consciousness of common descent is steadfast and omnipresent. Its strength lies in its daily tacitness rather than in its sudden, exceptional exertions. As long as a man knows he is descended exclusively from Jews, he is liable to a relapse; as long as others know it, they are liable to remind him. Assimilation and obliteration can be reached only through inter-marriage.

But inter-marriage as a program is not only an awful, but also a comical thing to contemplate. A million audiences in America and elsewhere have pitied and cheered the heroes and heroines who have defied marriages of convenience or state to follow the dictates of honorable love. Thousands of speeches have been made on the stage and in the talkies denouncing the interference of policy with passion. George Bernard Shaw has introduced the theme a dozen times into his prefaces and plays. As for Heywood Broun, though he is not a play-

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wright, he is an actor. Have these men no feeling of their trade? How can they condemn an entire people to political marriage?

Jews marry Jewesses because they fall in love with each other—an immemorial and universal habit. Sometimes, when passion crosses the racial line, mixed marriages take place. In either circumstance it is wrong for older and “wiser” people to interfere. But only one part of the wrong is perceived by Messrs. Shaw and Broun. They will upbraid and ridicule opposition to mixed marriages, while themselves placing the weight of their authority against the unmixed marriage. In effect they would have Jewish fathers say sternly to their sons, when the latter contemplate lawful union with a Jewish maiden, something like the following: “Stop! Think of your unhappy children, who will be wholly Jewish: think of your duty to the Jewish problem.” Would they also have idealistic parents turn son or daughter out of doors for putting their passions before the call of humanity?

The causes which impel Jews and Jewesses so frequently to fall in love with each other cannot be allowed to interfere with this argument. It may have to do with propinquity, with mother-complexes or with a sense of common destiny. But no one will

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suggest that there is less love between Jewish couples than between others. And so, in the name of the sanctity of love and the biologic freedom of choice, we must appeal to Shaw and Broun for a little tolerance and kindness, and address them after the manner of the traditional hero and heroine: "We admit you are older, and know more about life. But, oh, remember that you are living in an age of freedom. Remember above all your own youth. Did *you* go and marry Jewesses?"

But even if the Jewish youth, fired by the high ideal of a Jewless world, were to set up its standard of "I'm doing it for the sake of my great-grandchildren," and turn resolutely from their own kind—what of the gentile youth? The slogan may not appeal to sufficient numbers of non-Jewish boys and girls. It is all very well for older people to send the youth into the battle-line of the mixed marriage, while they skulk at home in the security of their own marriage of passion; but we have seen too much of that kind of vicarious daring: the gentile youth is infected with rebellion not less than the Jewish.

I do not say that inter-marriage as an ideal is not beautiful. It is only so impracticable. It is something like ultimate Communism, which pre-

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supposes a state of mind in which Communism is unnecessary and without which it is impossible.

Inter-marriage must, then, be left to take place of itself. The Jews must only exert themselves to create those preliminary conditions in which inter-marriages would occur tacitly and without effort.

But even this program, comparatively sound though it looks, is not much more natural than the direct assault. The Jew must make a conscious effort to detach himself from his people, drift out into a wider world, ally himself with what are called universal interests. (I might observe in passing that loving one's own children is a universal interest.) He must try and forget the meaningless accident of his birth; and he must first of all perceive that there is no affirmative reason for remembering it.

I stress the words *conscious effort*. Unconscious efforts cannot be spoken about. Besides, they have always been made. Unprogrammatic assimilation has always gone on and it has never sufficed. Again an ideal must intervene, and the drift must become a march.

But what are the details, for the individual? When an advertisement appears: "No Jews Wanted," should the assimilating Jew apply just

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the same, on the theory that after all he is *not* a Jew? I mean should people who used to think they were Jews, till they found the classification meaningless, apply for such jobs? Should they change their names to disguise the fact that they no longer are what they have never been, and when asked for their religion answer "Presbyterian," or "Unitarian"? They can, it is true, answer "No Religion," or, "Your question is unconstitutional and un-American," but that's no way to get a job or disguise your so-called Jewish origin.

What rule of conduct should assimilating Jews follow in regard to hotels, golf-clubs, university fraternities, and high society? Should they make efforts to join the Elks, the Knights of Columbus and the Ku Klux Klan? Clearly the Jews, in dissolving out as a mass, must dissolve out equably; their concentration among atheists or Unitarians may produce a bulge in the body politic which would betray their whereabouts.

Would it not be well, in that case, for Jews to turn up their noses, literally and surgically, lest gentiles turn up theirs figuratively? There would be ancient warrant for the practice. In the Books of the Maccabees we are told that Jewish athletes underwent a second operation to undo the effects of

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the first and, appearing naked in the arena, could be mistaken for Greeks. But they were in better case than Jews who reshape their noses. By a happy law of nature the children of the circumcised are still born uncircumcised; alas, the same law restores the treacherous shape of the nose to the second generation. Of course, the harm is not irremediable. A surgeon can always be called in on the eighth day. But there is a particular danger here; there may ultimately arise a queer sect which has replaced circumcision by an operation on the nose. However, this would be a transient phenomenon, for the Jews are a subdominant type, and they would recede, together with their noses, into ultimate oblivion. But the difficulties of the long transitional period must not be underestimated.

Let us inquire further into the mnemonics of forgetfulness. How is a "former Jew" supposed to feel when, as frequently happens, Jews are discussed in his company? Should he take up a kindly, remote attitude, reacting as if Chinamen or Dukhobors were under discussion? If he feels an atavistic resentment rising against derogatory remarks, should he leave the room lest he betray himself to the others and—what is worse—to him-

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self? Should he risk social and emotional complications by a suspiciously vigorous defense of the general principles of tolerance and humanity? And if he gets past the first question of "Pardon me, are you a Jew" with a manly negative, what should he answer to the second: "Pardon me, didn't you use to be one?"

Would it not really be best for Jews to move away from one another, and invert the law of the Pale? I know that this too implies deep difficulties. A Jew can't always trust himself; every now and again a twinge of home-longing comes over him. He passes a synagogue and something foolish may tug at his heart. He hears of assaults on the Jewish homeland and a faint comradeship stirs in him. The further away he is from Jews, the safer he is. If the old devil is too strong for him, he ought to take a ride to a neighboring town, steal incognito into a Jewish meeting or service, and get the mood over with in safety.

I am aware that there are numbers of Jews who have slipped past the line without facing any of these difficulties; Jews who have had the good fortune to belong to liberal circles. But these circles are small and will always remain so. I am speaking of the masses of the Jews and of the problem of

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mass assimilation. The intellectual gentile thinks of his used-to-be-Jewish friends and sees how easily they got by. He transfers the case to the masses—and therefore what he prescribes is utterly unreal.

The unreality becomes more striking when we think of the children. Should assimilating Jewish parents hide from their children the fact of their Jewish origin? Should the word Jew be avoided in the house? Should all sentimental recollections of the past, all moods of weakness and remembrance, be suppressed in the presence of the children, like drunkenness, parental quarrels and other vices? If the questions come up, (and how frequently they do!): “Daddy, do you believe in God? Did you use to? Did your father?”—what is to be the answer? Suppose the neighbors, in all innocence, mention to *their* child that the people next door used to be Jews, and in the school or the yard the cry of “Sheeny!” arises, what answer must be given to the horrified question of the youngster? On scores of occasions I have heard assimilating Jews tell of their pain and embarrassment when junior came home and asked: “But it isn’t true that we’re Jews, is it?”

The “anti-Semitism” of children is a curiously innocent and savage thing. It is picked up with

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Jack the Giant Killer and The Farmer in the Dell, with furtive stories told up the alley and with the unobserved idiom of daily speech on the lips of elders. It is all very well for kindly liberals to tell us: "One oughtn't to live among people who so carelessly infect their children with prejudices. One ought to find pleasanter and more enlightened neighbors." But the trouble is that the tiny areas inhabited by liberals, ethical culturists, and other enlightened people, can be surrounded or interpenetrated only by correspondingly small numbers of Jews. Most of the city acreage of the Western World is preëmpted by plain people who know nothing about the evils of uncensored folklore.

When Levein changes his name to Lawin the cuteness of the gesture lies in the fact that he is trading on the impotence of the other Leveins. He can make his getaway only because they cannot. The success of the trick depends on leaving the other Leveins in the lurch. For if all the Leveins and the Levys and Cohens and Horowitzes and Goldbergs and Samuels were to make a simultaneous rush for the open, the jig would be up for Lawin. The sudden shrinkage of certain patches in the telephone book would startle the public. A strong sentiment would rise against permitting

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legal change of name. Landlords would grow as etymological as universities. *Some* sort of protection would be found; and in the end the children of the Lawins would find themselves extruded from the area of occasional reminders into the dreaded patches of overt Jewishness.

The tears which have been shed, in all the countries of the world, by Jewish children at school, are enough to wash away the words of the great teachers of mankind. Millions of adults remember these tears, if only in their sleep. What, then, is the good of saying cleverly that "it is only anti-Semitism that keeps the Jewish people alive"? *Meinetwegen!* The observation is purely academic. It is like saying that only death keeps the insurance companies alive. There is only one country in the world where Jewish children are not in their earliest years infected with the complex. In Palestine the hostility to the Jews still runs high, but it is a clean-cut hostility which may yet be resolved. Elsewhere the hostility has become so complicated, so twisted and distorted, so deeply rooted in the way of thought and in the structure of the culture, that even to reach the manageable elements we must wait for something like a millennium.

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It is strange that with all our interest in education so little attention should have been directed toward the childhood aspects of anti-Semitism, assimilation and Jewishness. Only hints exist of the rebellion of the children of assimilating Jews. In German Jewry—the classic example of programmatic assimilation—the phenomenon is so widespread as to constitute a major feature of the life. Where did the children of baptized and assimilating Jews pick up their absurdly insistent Jewishness? Whence came the impulse of revolt against the “liberalism” of the parents? To a large extent from torments of childhood. Thousands of young men and women turned their backs on the goal after half the road had been covered. An outraged self-respect refused to listen any longer to the shooing of parents who could only answer the cry of the children with words like these: “It’s all a mistake. You’re not a Jew, you’re a German, a cosmopolitan, a Lutheran, an atheist, an agnostic—anything but a Jew.”

The struggle between “reactionary” parents and “revolutionary” children was inverted. American parents whose children have turned Bolshevik and gone to prison do not feel unhappier than assimilating German Jews whose children have turned

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Zionist and have gone to Palestine. Thousands of them are in the colonies and cities of the fragmentary Jewish homeland. Thousands of others are in training, waiting for their opportunity. They had found a way of turning a hopeless, negative misery and humiliation into an affirmation of life. What had been most unbearable had been not the Jewishness, but the suffering without being Jewish. The children who come from frankly Jewish homes also suffer; but they have a refuge. The pogroms of Jewish history have perhaps caused less pain than the calculated policy of kindly parents. In the moment when they denied father and mother, and allied themselves with something creative in Jewish life, these young men and women took revenge on the pain of their childhood and straightened out the complexes. Henceforth anti-Semitism might hurt, but it could not cripple.

The difference between the "flight" to Palestine and the "flight" to assimilation is this: the former is made with the consent and encouragement of those who wish to remain Jewish. The very possibility of this flight is bound up with a return of the whole people to itself. In the latter case the flight is an abandonment; it is an addition to the numbers of the conscious or unconscious oppressors, and a

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diminution in the numbers of those on the defensive. But concerning the rôle of Palestine in the future life of American Jewry, something will be said later. Here I deal only with the realities of programmatic assimilation. We must face not a theoretical world of Shaws and Brouns, but an actual, daily world of businessmen, organizations, interests, prejudices and passions; we must consider, not the reactions of a band of philosophers and saints, but those of men and women who pass through childhood, suffer when they are "insulted," congregate under pressure, feel kinship in extrusion, have to make a living, need to maintain a certain self-respect, and are born neither wiser nor better than the majorities which surround them. Their problem must be seen in the light of social history, and not of abstract theorems of adjustment. It is no use "telling them" to get out of the big towns and scatter; centuries of history organized them for living together, and they hunger for the shelter of one another's presence. It is no use "telling them" to turn farmers; circumstances turned them into traders and home artisans. "Telling them" is quite useless if the program is not in line with the dynamics of social life. It is true that Jews can be farmers, but they have "scattered"

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only when they were permitted to go out and build a land for themselves. There the dynamics of life compelled them to distribute themselves equally through the levels of the economic pyramid. And then they did not need to be "told," for the passionate ideology sprang forth of itself out of the need.

Jews came to America as others did, partly to escape persecution, but mostly to make a living. The country needed them as it needed the others. And like the others, they made their living as best they could, wherever they could. This they will continue to do.

The past is not a dead thing; it is alive in the momentum and the stage of every historic process. "Telling" a people has point only to the extent that the advice is an attempt to create higher values out of those things which are inevitable. We are dealing here with a human problem in which the group called Jewish is implicated. What I have had to say above in regard to mean behavior is not Jewish particularly; it has to do with human dignity as such, with human worth and self-respect, with the ethics of personality. What's in a name? Nothing. But there is much in the repudiation of it.

The correct appraisal of forces is itself a historic

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force, the only kind of creative free-will that exists in groups or individuals. Neither Jewish nor gentile leaders see the realities of the Jewish problem, and to that extent the conscious deflection of the future to something affirmative is hampered. Intelligent groups of Jews create less than they are able to create because the leadership in the country halts and stumbles. The appraisal of forces which I offer here may be wrong and therefore uncreative. But the true and creative appraisal—the *schöpferische Erkenntniss*, to use Keyserling's phrase—will not be reached by trying to fit realities to good intentions and theories. We must fit good intentions to realities.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

*Jewry and the World Mob **

WHILE the physical economic world standardizes, setting harder and harder round the Jewish group, a new tone emerges, cutting across national and racial boundaries. It is the tone of the great anti-cultural epoch. The world mob is coming to birth. In the technique of life and thought the nations present an increasing likeness, but that likeness is not accompanied by an increasing friendliness. On the contrary, as the old, transmitted cultural memories are forgotten or submerged, a new irritation springs up between group and group. The nations are most strikingly alike

* For an extended discussion of the first part of this chapter see *King Mob*, by Frank K. Notch (Harcourt, Brace and Co., New York, 1930).

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in the character of the hatreds which separate them.

For these hatreds have now become the sole outlet for the expression of individuality, the sole assertion of distinctiveness in a world which has washed away all other distinctions, in the flood of its standardized technology. Without an inward separateness of culture to absorb the impulses of self-expression, the nations become more extravert than ever. The old economic reasons for war remain; they are made more explosive by boredom, nervousness, and emptiness of inner life.

The nations are losing their character as moulds of cultures, and are taking on that of sociological and political units, held together by belly-interests alone. It does not matter, in this connection, whether a country is capitalist or communist; as long as the culture declines, the dominant spirit is, by compulsion, that of usefulness and vulgarity. The spiritual value is regarded as decadent, and what passes for spiritual value is a sort of "higher" utilitarianism. Shakespeare is justified because he teaches us how to write advertizing copy, mathematics is good for engineering, and manners have their use in the smoothing out of business contacts. It is regarded as affectation or degeneracy to waste

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time and energy on what benefits nothing but the invisible spirit. A man should spend his leisure in consuming something which can be sold to him at a profit. In Russia the same indulgence is regarded as bourgeois and counter-revolutionary. "Inwardness," "privacy," "living for one's self" fade from the individual and from the group experience.

Two parallel movements may therefore be observed in the world of ideas. Information is spreading faster today than ever before, but it is an information of facts, and carries with it no spiritual transforming power; so that people know more, but do not thereby become finer. On the other hand pure enjoyment of aesthetics is reduced to the lowest human denominator. An aesthetic enjoyment connected with the ancient discipline of a hereditary culture becomes rare. The reaction must be quick, simple and primitive, calling for no special training or aptitudes, no relationship to a body of national experience.

These things are new not in nature but in scope. They have always been self-defeating. The easily obtained is easily despised. Jazz, radio, movies are in themselves essentially uninteresting. Hence we have a union of the most ingenious modern devices

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with the most ancient tricks. The universal boredom is a variety of mental impotence; it is countered by the use of mental aphrodisiacs, and there is something pitiful in the frantic hunt for the sensational in a world which, presumably, should be fascinating as simple fare.

Jewish life has not escaped this fate wholly. Jews contribute externally to the pandemonium; and internally Jewish life threatens to become the replica of the world kaleidoscope. Irving Berlin, the one-finger Mozart of ragtime, Al Jolson, the Falasha, whose English renditions of *A Brievaler Mamen* have melted the heart of America, Balaban and Katz of Chicago, who first introduced West Point into the theatre, and placed elegance within the reach of all, are first class instances of Jewish cooperation in the building of the American civilization. Anne Nichols is not ours, but we did our best with *The Jazz Singer*. Let us not forget the founders of the Book of the Month Club, the initiators of an era of independent thinking and reading, and Haldemann-Julius, who has spread culture wider and thinner than any man before. Last, and best, let us remember Lewis Browne, the Elinor Glyn of religion.

Concerning the inner changes in Jewish life I

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have used the phrases "identity without individuality" and "uncreative gregariousness." The chapters on the rabbinate, the effects of philanthropy, the English-Jewish Press, and the fragments under the title "Cantor, Let's Go!" will have indicated my full meaning. Yet to the extent that the above phrases are merely passive, they are inaccurate. It might appear that nothing but a name divides Jewish from non-Jewish life; actually, however, the negative or passive fact that there is no difference becomes a positive or active principle of evil when the dissolution of the identity is impossible.

For the Jews are faced with something much worse than mere assimilation or race death. They are moving, precisely at a time when their lot threatens to become harder than ever before, toward the mass imbecility which characterizes the world spirit of our time. Judaism begins to take its tone from the nickel-in-the-slot epoch of human spiritual history. If the process continues the so-called Jewish group will be distinguished by nothing except its perpetual complaints.

These complaints will be all the more wearisome to all parties when accompanied, as they are bound to be, by iterations of what the Jews "once did"

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for humanity. Pride in the past is at all times unreasonable; its one justification is that it can serve as a spur to the future. Without that justification it becomes the lowest form of usury. A peddler of socks or bonds reminding the world that he is a descendant of the Maccabees, a priest-rabbi boasting that he is blood-brother to Maimonides, merely adds to his other defects those of the parasite. He cannot pension himself on great contemporaries like Einstein and Freud, much less then on the almost forgotten past.

The darker shadow on the picture of tomorrow, almost obliterating the cruelty of the economic struggle, will be that new factor in Jewish life—emptiness; out of that emptiness there will spring, paradoxically, unavoidable evils. For a group that is held together by nothing but external pressure, having no cohesive principle of its own, becomes permeated by impotent resentments and mutual disgusts. Flung together in an economic struggle, with no vital illusion of an ideal to help them transcend the purely physical, Jews will regard one another as the authors of their misery: "If there were fewer Jews, we could get along better!" A bitterness without an outlet and without relief, a desire to run, but no refuge to run to, a hatred of

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the blind, mad destiny which placed this senseless burden upon them, will fill their lives. Without an explanation for themselves or for their children, without the consolation of an inviolable personality, they will torment themselves and the rest of the world with perpetual protests. A secret loathing of themselves and envy of everyone not born a Jew will eat them within. The beginnings of that self-contempt, that self-loathing and that envy are already to be noted in modern Jews.

Losing their sense of historical continuity, their national memory, they will be unable to understand how their position developed. They will appear in their own eyes as the victims of some stupid malevolence in the scheme of things. Like the children of assimilating Jews who come home crying "But we *aren't* Jews, are we?" they will cry out to the gentiles: "But we are just the same kind of persons as you! Come into our temples, our meetings, our festivities—you will not know that you are among Jews. . . ." As their forbears in the Middle Ages threw the door open during the Passover ceremonies, that the Christian might come in and see that no ritual blood was being used, so the Jews of the future will throw open their homes to the rest of the world, inviting inspec-

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tion, imploring it to believe that they have nothing to hide, no secret character, no mysterious entity. It will not avail them. The tremendous mediæval vision of an accursed race will at last have become a reality.

The self-hatred of the Jews has been made the subject of an interesting work by the German Jew, Theodor Lessing, who traces the beginnings of this pathological condition to the earliest literature of the people. In his opinion the unique spirit of self-criticism which appears in our folk-loristic books—a spirit without parallel in the records of any other people—is related to the latest agonies of individual Jews attempting to escape the racial cultural heritage. But he does not distinguish between the self-criticism of a people with high ideals from which they defected regularly, and the bitter self-corrosion of individuals who are not conscious of any ideals for which to suffer and to which to return. The old Jew said that we suffered because we were in exile and in an abnormal condition. Ours is the fault because we still are not perfect enough to bring about the return. This kind of self-accusation is creative. But the modern Jew has nothing to suffer for except the doubtful privilege of the doubtful claim that he is descended from

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Abe the Mesopotamian. And in his opinion the real source of his suffering is the fact that we are genuinely loathsome.

How Jews can hate Jews for being Jews is illustrated by the difference of tone in the internal economic struggle. In the Middle Ages it was possible for one group of Jews to fail another group in the hour of need, or to exploit its weakness. But the sin was not attended by an emotion of contempt and loathing. In those days no secret and impotent longing to assimilate was blocked by the presence of large numbers of Jews which had to remain identifiable for the purposes of the economic struggle. Individual Jews, having defected to Christianity, might aid the persecutors; there was no group assault on the value of Jewishness as such. Hans F. R. Günther, in his *Rassenkunde des Jüdischen Volkes*, quotes an extraordinary article which appeared in the publication of the National German Jews. The article deals with the Jews who tried to flee into Germany from the pogroms of countries to the east:

“These people are quite right from their own point of view when they try to shake the dust of pogrom countries from their shoes and flee to the milder west. The locusts are also right from their

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own point of view when they descend in swarms on our fields. But the man who is defending his own land, which gives him his bread and his well-being, is also in the right. And who can deny that they come in swarms? They laugh at rents, they laugh at officials. . . . Above all they laugh at the wishes of the tenants. They have only one purpose in view, and they use every opportunity to further it. But they are far from making houses the sole object of their rapacity. Whatever money can buy is, in their eyes, a proper object for their greed.

"Nobody knows how many Jews from Eastern Europe there are in Germany. We only know that all statistics lie, public and private equally. The workers' relief committees of the Jews lie. The people of whom we speak do not go to these committees. The main stream comes to us out of German Austria. They come with unobjectionable passports, and are German citizens of the Jewish faith. Out of Tarnopol and surrounding districts they have conquered Vienna and are now conquering Berlin. When they have become masters of Berlin they will stretch out their strategic lines and conquer Paris. The empty space created by the fall in the rate of exchange sucks them in."

The point I wish to make in quoting this passage

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has nothing to do with the reluctance of a given group of German Jews to help East European Jews escape from the hell of the Ukraine and Poland. It is the accompanying note of rage and contempt which occupies my attention. It is the wild exaggeration, born of a frantic loathing. The *conquest* of Vienna! The conquest of Paris and Berlin! By whom? By miserable and terrified Galician Jews! A cold and businesslike repudiation of interest would have been comprehensible. But this passion of hatred corresponds to something more than a defense of one's economic interest; it springs from the inner self-disgust which is the companion of self-consciousness in the assimilating Jew. And as larger numbers of Jews turn toward assimilation as toward something both possible and desirable, the sources of such hatreds become more numerous and more potent.

It is against this intolerable prospect, against this immense boredom and self-weariness, that Jewish life must struggle today. Carried along with the rest of the world in the stampede toward spiritual vacuity, it is threatened by an intenser tedium, a bleaker aridity and a baser relationship between human beings. For the play of economic forces will hold together an empty structure of

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numbers, an agglomeration of units eager to fly apart and forever unable to do so. Like pebbles ground together by the clash of waters, the Jews will grate on one another, wear one another down. They will hear always the bleak, senseless noise of their own grinding contacts and will wonder how it was that the Jews did not commit suicide, individually, centuries and centuries ago. A double vain longing, for life or for death, will haunt them continuously, but they will be able to achieve neither.

Nothing less than this is, for the Jew, the statement of his own problem. Not the approval of the world, nor the winning of political rights, nor even the avoidance of pogroms, touches the quick of the reality. And Jewish leadership which is afraid to speak out the whole truth will do little to help in the ordering of the forces which struggle against the death-in-life which threatens.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Lights in Darkness

EVERY so often a rabbi will preach a sermon, a publicist write an article, entitled: "Why I am a Jew"—an abstract defense of a choice that was never made. It is a pity that Jews cannot reconcile themselves to the simple truth: they are Jews because they were born Jews, and they remain Jews because in the mass they can become nothing else. That is to say, they are born into a certain group, trained in a certain consciousness, and kept there by the force of circumstances.

The whole of this book is dedicated to the proposition that Jews must make a virtue of necessity; and if this sounds like a dissatisfied admission, the tenor of my arguments has been misunderstood. Whatever beauty or dignity there is in life is born

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of a necessity transformed into a virtue. We are born by a necessity outside of ourselves, but, being born, nothing remains—nothing human and reasonable and livable—but to turn this compulsion to fine account by an affirmative attitude. We must work for bread, and we must repress many instincts lest the world tumble about our ears, which are circumstances not of our choosing. But since they are there, they must be accepted as the framework of our creative will. Finally we must die, and even this hateful necessity is transformed into good by proud acceptance and by contemplation of the relative immortality of our influence. So to live that we forget the compulsion, and come to derive joy from living and from working, is the aim of all practical philosophy and ethics. "The pursuit of truth is a form of courage, and a philosopher may well love truth for its own sake, in that he is disposed to confront destiny, whatever it may be, with zest when possible, with resignation when necessary, and not seldom with amusement." [Santayana]

At least one question will linger in the reader's mind. Granting everything I have said concerning the pressure on us, knowing too, as Professor Seligman has said (quoted by Heywood Broun in

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Christians Only) that "as Jews, Jewish students cannot get anywhere by being merely as good," what practical point is there in specifically Jewish knowledge, Jewish tradition? I have said that the superior equipment of the Jews in the world struggle has lost all potency; and it is idle to argue, as some Jews still do, that the substance of our ancient studies still makes for a valuable worldly training. It is true that many successful Jews will still be found, even in America, whose wits were sharpened in boyhood on the revolving problems of the Talmud. There are doctors, real-estate dealers, merchants—I have met them in nearly every State—who attribute much of their success to the years they spent in the *Yeshivah*. They are undoubtedly right. The fact remains, however, that if they had given the same time and devotion to secular and utilitarian studies, they would have done even better. Much study of Jewish things is certainly better than little study of anything else; but an equal training in Talmud, on one hand, and in modern business methods and economics, on the other, leaves the former out of the field.

But the Jewish tradition of high intellectuality and discipline cannot be transmitted and made effective by argument, however cogent. No tradi-

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tion is kept alive simply as a principle. It must live in the mind and imagination as a human experience, with a record of its own, with expressions in history, proverbs, stories, books, martyrdoms. What I have set down coldly and weakly concerning the proper rôle of the intellectual principle, *glows* in the story of the Jewish people. There a sense of kinship with scholars and writers and students awakens an envy of their life, even with its pains and frustrations. Love of the mind is contagious. It cannot be imparted as a proposition in Euclid is imparted. Intellectual excitement can be inspired by example; it cannot be awakened by making out an abstract case for it.

A tradition, to be kept alive, must also reinterpret itself from age to age, so that its language does not grow obsolete. It is foolish to let the archaism of the form be the death of the content. There are modern Jews who turn from the wealth of the Jewish past because it was bound up with dogmatic religion; but then there are Communists who turn from Shakespeare because, as an artist, he was part of the English national spirit which was born with the English bourgeoisie. The modern intellectual is so afraid of eating something

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that isn't kosher that he restricts himself, frequently, to a diet of formulas.

The Jewish tradition has become, for Jews, a necessity of morale; its function is no longer (as it never *consciously* was) that of a direct preparation for the economic struggle, but that of a creative escape from an intolerable situation; more exactly, the conversion of an intolerable situation into the basis of a decent and creative life. To live together at all, Jews must live together in a tradition. A bleak community of gymnasiums, charity organizations, temples, poker clubs and even economic interests has led to a bitterness of spirit which is not the less real because its psychological causes are only dimly understood.

But whether they are understood or not, these causes have touched off at a hundred points, even in this country, a revulsion of which I have become increasingly aware in periodic visits to the Jewish communities. "Weavers in secret" Bialik has called them, anonymous spirits, not leaders, who will not acquiesce in the conspiracy of vulgar negation. They consider the records of the Jewish people, and apprehend the slow growth of its values; they see the complete structure of that long life, and note how the organism has adapted and re-

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adapted itself; and contemplating it as a continuity, and not as a jerky succession of unrelated generations, they feel themselves to be in the presence of a living thing which calls to them, draws them into itself, bidding them create again. They perceive that they can do better by themselves and by the rest of the world, by their own spirit and that of mankind (it is almost unnecessary for me to say, I think, that Jews with a strong Jewish culture, are also the strongest in other cultures) if they associate themselves with this ancient and supple organism.

To such groups, small but obstinate, the Jewish tradition is not a piece of advice, for advice is cheap and can be had anywhere for the asking. It is not just an argument, accurate and sterile, but a fullness of life which, once accepted, needs no further justification.

To these groups, again, the enemies of Jewish life are those Jews who are devoid of the intellectual tradition, and who are alienated from those human beings who, in the past, gave it substance through their efforts and hopes. The enemies are the theologians who would make of Judaism an excogitated system of ethics, the rabbis busy posing for the non-Jewish world, the soft-hearted, soft-

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headed parents who tremble for the minds of their children (forgetting how the Jewish mind flourished under severe discipline in the past, forgetting too that out of this discipline always came an enhanced capacity for the world's cultures), the leaders who represent us in every country as having been admitted on approval, and bid us guide ourselves by surrounding standards and methods, the Mosaic-Persuasionists who will not rest until we are distinguishable from the world by nothing but a lying name.

The human material of these obscure groups, sturdy, lovable, vital, is second to none that I have encountered in the peoples I have lived amongst. But these groups are almost invariably distinguished by their recognition of Jewish tradition as a whole thing. To them Palestine has become a necessary projection of the will. As long as we waited for the Messiah to release our folk will, Palestine could remain the symbol of a sentiment; but when we no longer believe in the Messiah, Palestine must become either a reality or a sentimentality. For Palestine cannot be torn out of the creative Jewish tradition without laying the structure in ruins. Whatever the obstacles, the building

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of a Jewish center of civilization in the land which cradled the language and cultural personality of the people inheres in a Jewishness properly understood and properly lived. The meaning of Palestine to all Jewry—Palestine as a sociological fact, and Palestine as a new world-Weimar, according to the dreams of the Achad Ha-amists—flows from this principle or else does not exist.

In this book I have stressed the economic motif in reaction against its too frequent elimination. Yet I do not believe that all human impulses come solely from the belly. The rigid materialists make, even from their own point of view, two errors: they do not make enough allowance for the time-lag between ideas and new economic set-ups; and they seem to assume that human groups react to their own economic needs with the accuracy of natural laws. Also, just as individuals become the victims of ideas which are not to their animal advantage, so entire groups will cling to hypnotic moralities and cultures which are physically costly and pointless. The economic "law," even as it operates in groups, compromises with other "laws"; the will to eat, be clothed, be sheltered, reproduce, compromises with other wills, the will to be interested and interesting, the will to applaud and be ap-

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plauded, the will to be amused, the will not to be bored, the will to find intellectual fusion with the inscrutable universe, the will not to be alienated from sunsets, from intellectual delight, from the dead who begot us and the unborn we will beget.

And it is also true that the desire to cooperate with human beings is as continuous as instinctive rivalry, and the love of friendship as real as the love of domination and the necessities of exploitation. I have known instances which relate to the subject matter of this book; communities where the economic rivalry between Jews and non-Jews, either unperceived or over-ridden, has not interfered with a happy relationship; communities where, for instance, Jewish institutions draw more from the general chest than the Jews themselves contribute.

Acknowledging all this with a feeling of pride for the possibilities of the race, we must still bear in mind that these are only the indications of what may yet come to pass in the far-off future for the largest groups, and finally for humanity as a whole. When that time will come, perhaps a new shuffle will be needed in all human relationships, group and individual. But I am unable to conceive

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a humanity not organized, for purposes of spiritual production, for the purpose of interest (as distinguished from interests) into groups with characters of their own.

The economic reality reinforces a psychologic necessity which will perhaps outlive it. My people is my instrument for cooperating with mankind, my channel to humanity. It organizes my affections and hatreds and brings them to effective focus. The ugliness I hate in Jewry is hateful everywhere, the good in it good for everyone. Love of humanity, when not implemented by the love of a people, is usually gushy and diffused sentimentalism. Depend upon it that the man who works for the world as a whole, not through the most immediate, most natural and most accessible passions, will forget the Eskimos one day, the Chinese the next.

Through ourselves we Jews, like every other people, can reach the world. But we must remember that the affirmative powers in us, and their interplay with the world situation, call for the acceptance of a heavy discipline. Only the terrific illusion that we can be Jews on easy terms, that we can take life as it comes, tacitly—as others do—can be fatal to us. In childhood and manhood we

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must carry the yoke which our forebears carried, and we must carry it gladly, because the only alternative is an intellectual and moral leprosy from which there is no escape into death.

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